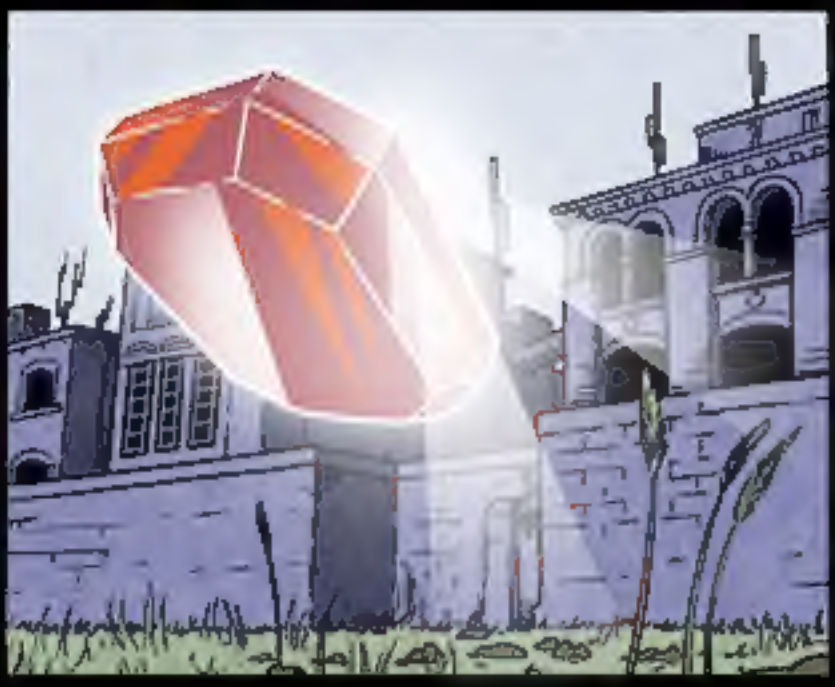
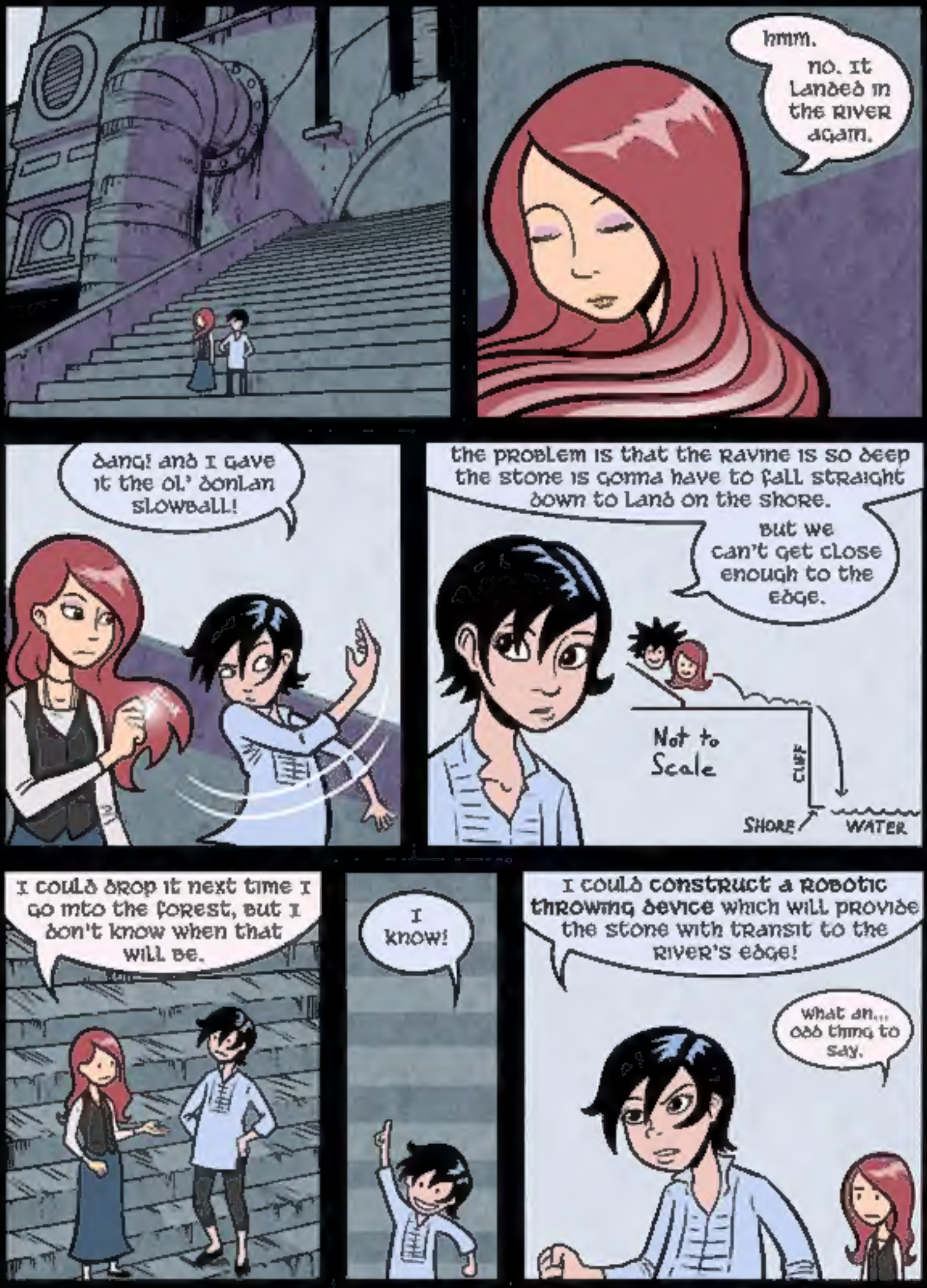
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 30:

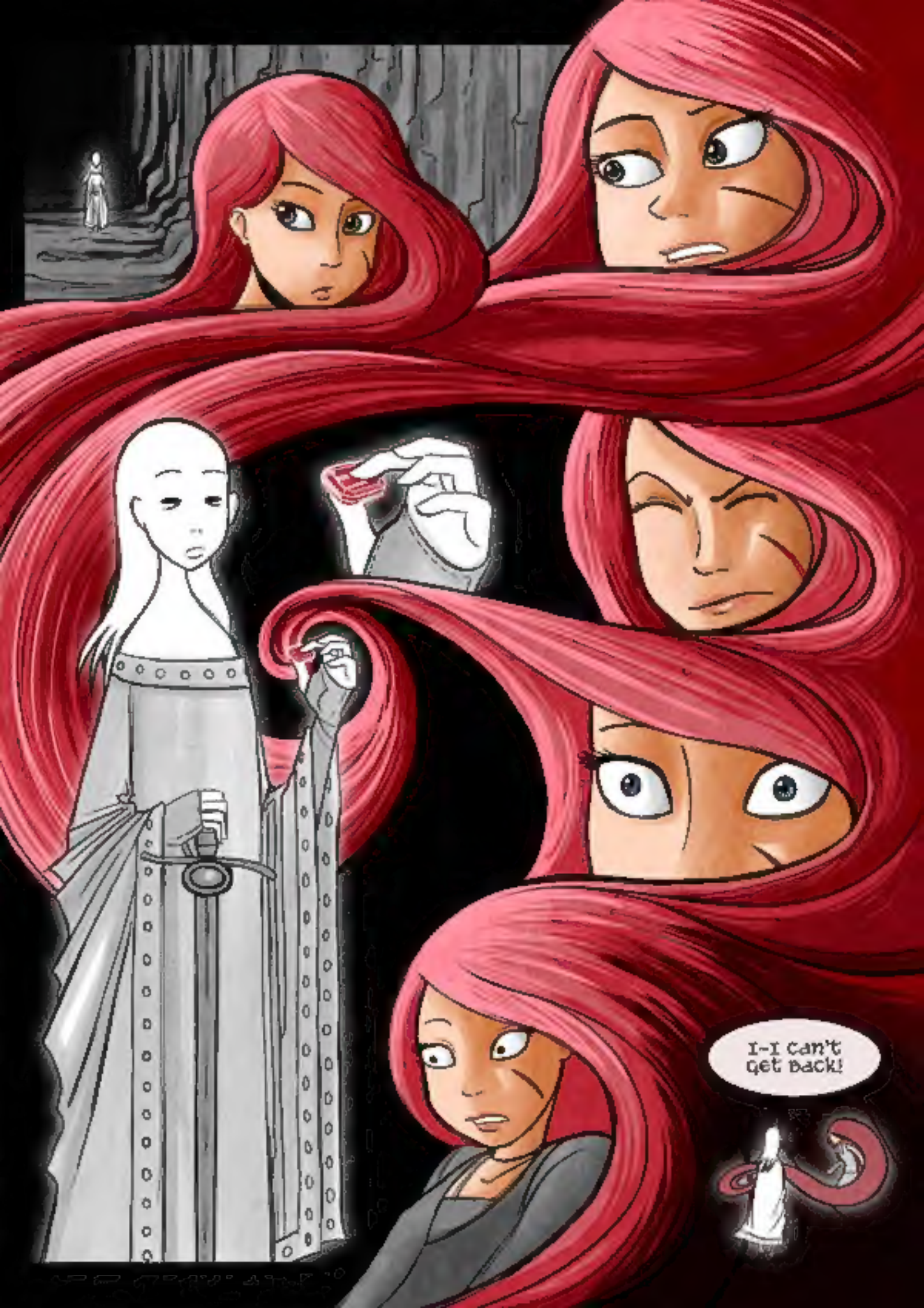
The Coward Heart

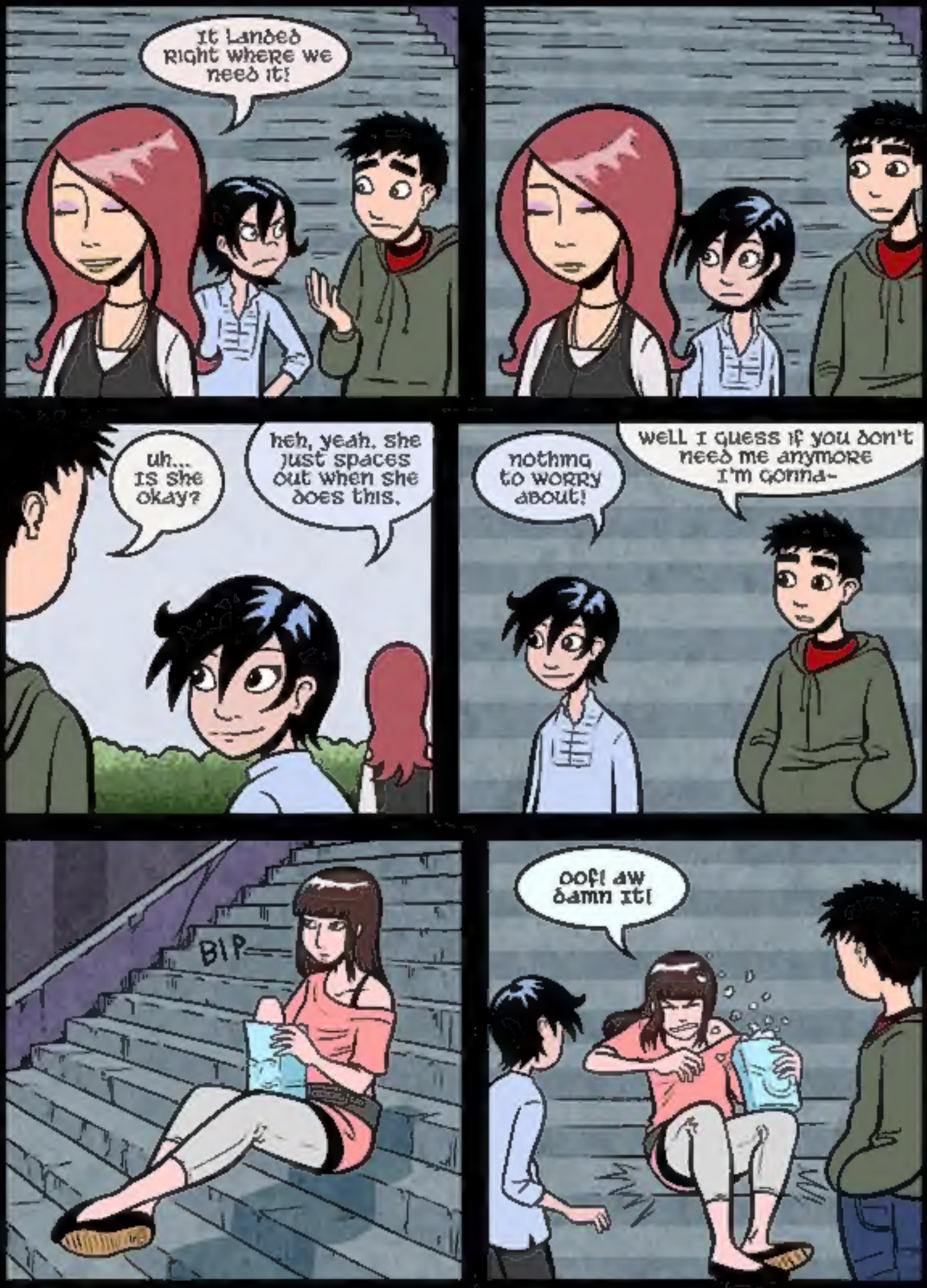



hmm.
no. It landed in the river again.
dang! and I gave it the ol' donlan slowball!
the problem is that the ravine is so deep the stone is gonna have to fall straight down to land on the shore.
but we can't get close enough to the edge.
Not to Scale
CLIFF
SHORE
WATER
I could drop it next time I go into the forest, but I don't know when that will be.
I know!
I could construct a robotic throwing device which will provide the stone with transit to the river's edge!
what an... odd thing to say.

I think I know someone who could make the shot.
soon
thanks again for coming all this way, andrew.
no problem. what are you guys doing out here anyway?
we need you to throw my blinker stone in that direction.
that's it?
that's it!
welp.
WAAK!
BAP

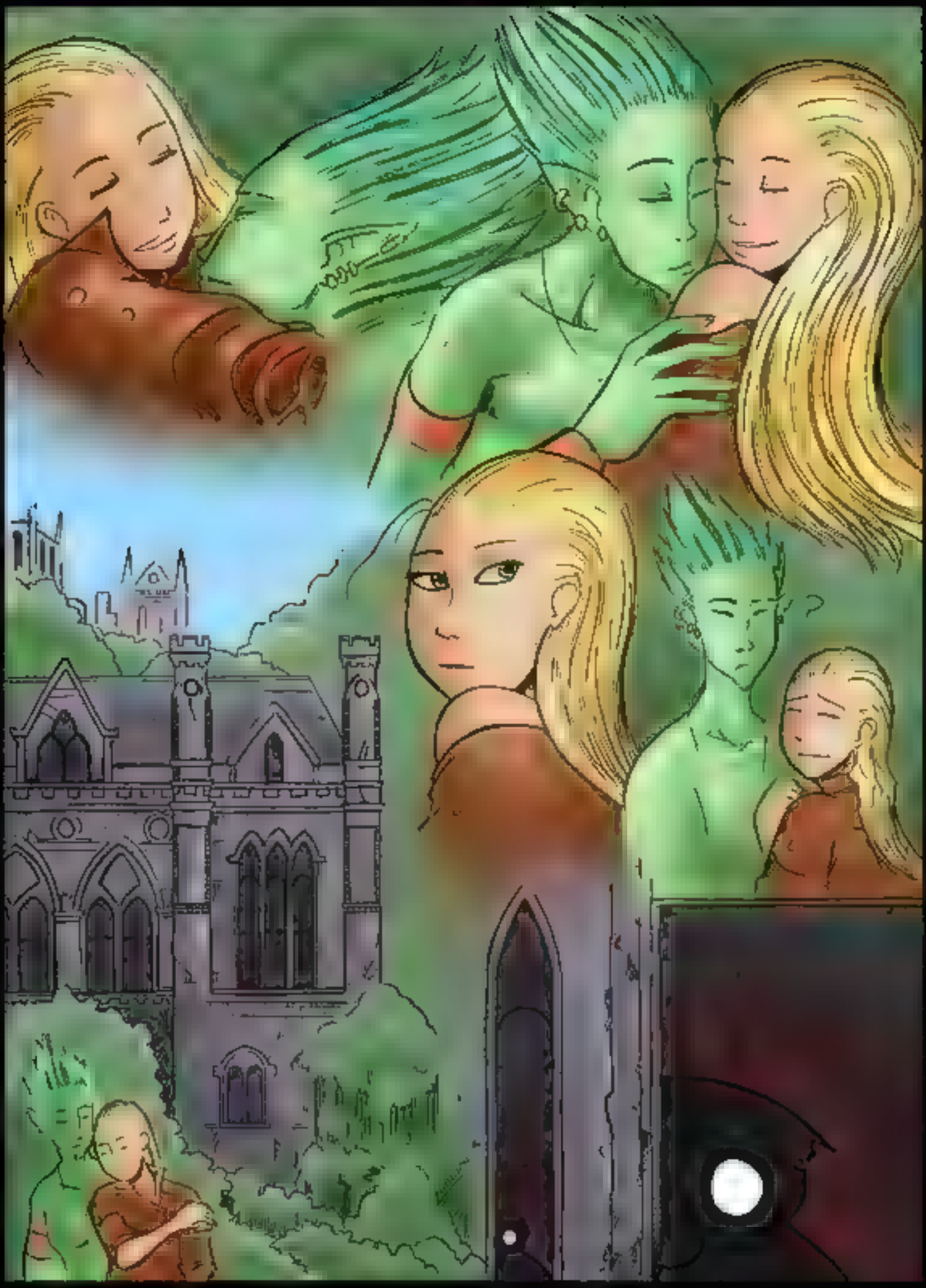
It landed right where we need it!

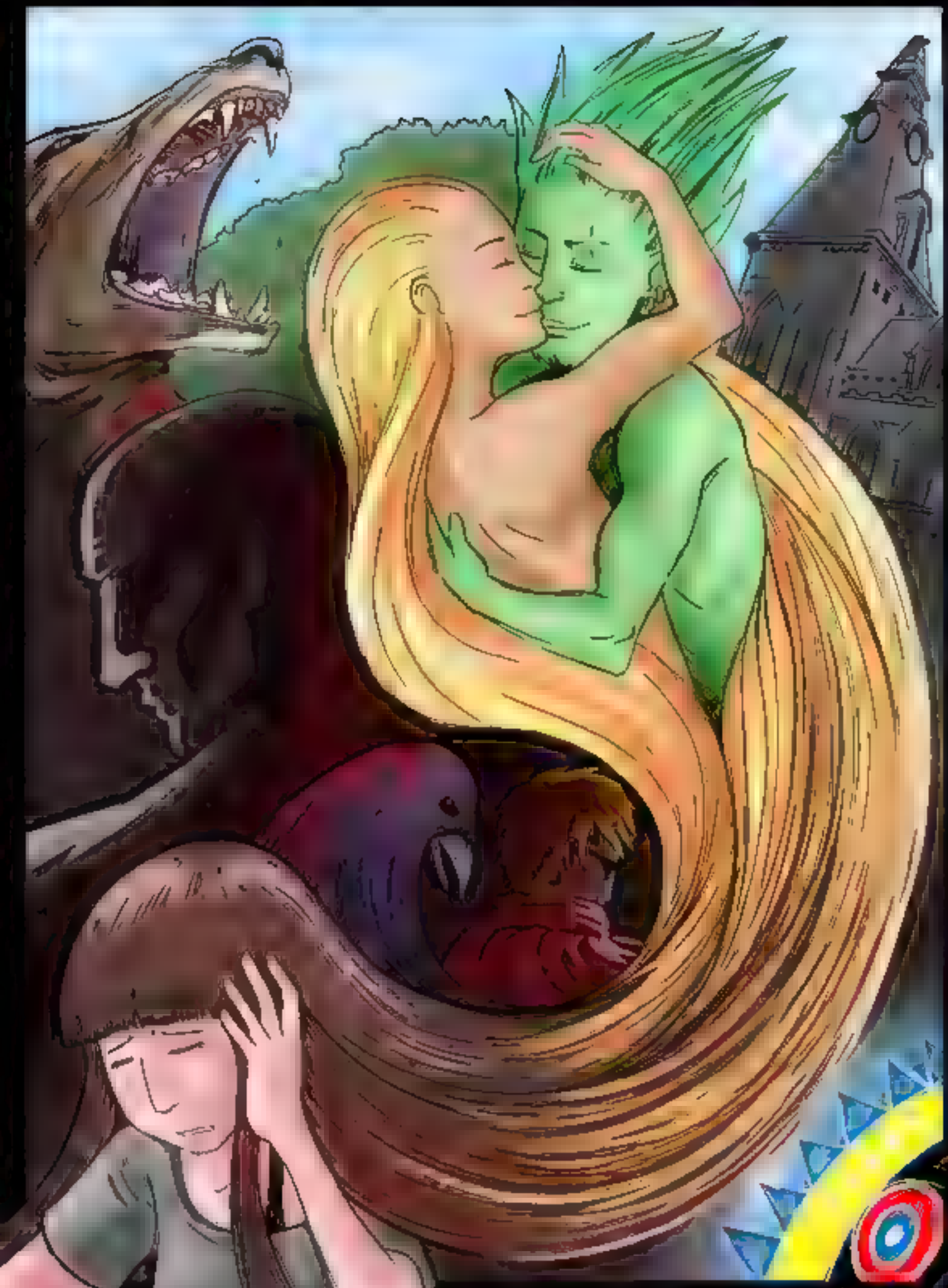

I-I can't get back!

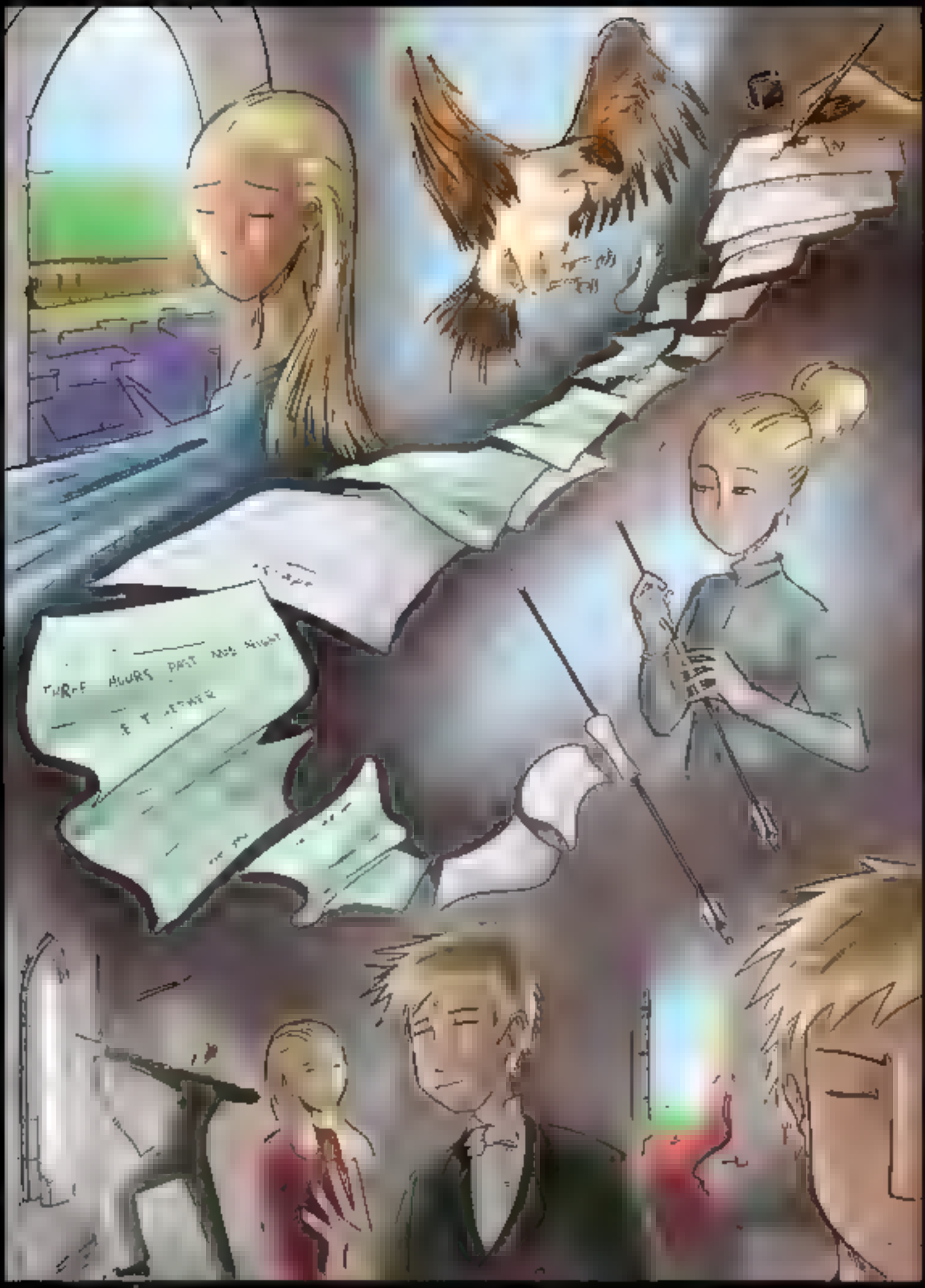

It landed right where we need it!
uh... is she okay?
heh, yeah. she just spaces out when she does this.
nothing to worry about!
well I guess if you don't need me anymore I'm gonna-
BIP
oof! aw damn it!

that's the third time this week, parley.
you getting the hang of it?
no I am not! It happens at random! I was just watching a movie with my mates!
was it a, uh, romantic movie?
yeah, how'd you know?
Flick
Brush
who are you anyway?
oh, you're carver's friend?
what're you doing hanging out with these kids, smitty?
you shouldn't even be out here, ca~

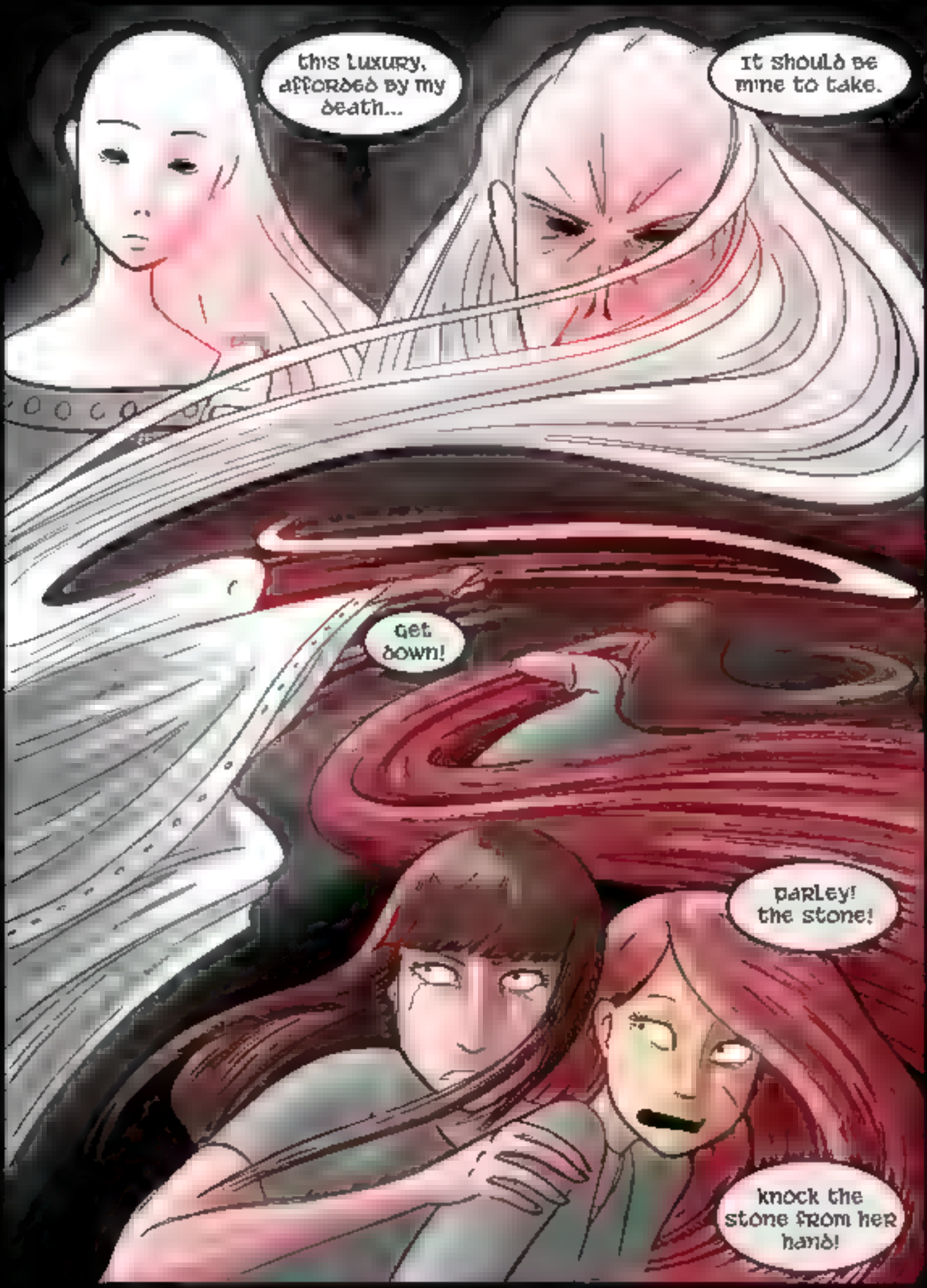
parley!
wh-what's going on?!







my heart was run through and left to die on the riverbed.
the useless shell of my body was ensnared by the green light and discarded over time.
and you
what remained of my spirit, my anger, my hate, was forged, white hot, into the sentinel of these waters
coddled child of that damned place
you come here to mock me with this gleaming heart of yours.


this luxury, afforded by my death...
It should be mine to take.
Get down!
Parley! the stone!
knock the stone from her hand!

that's it!

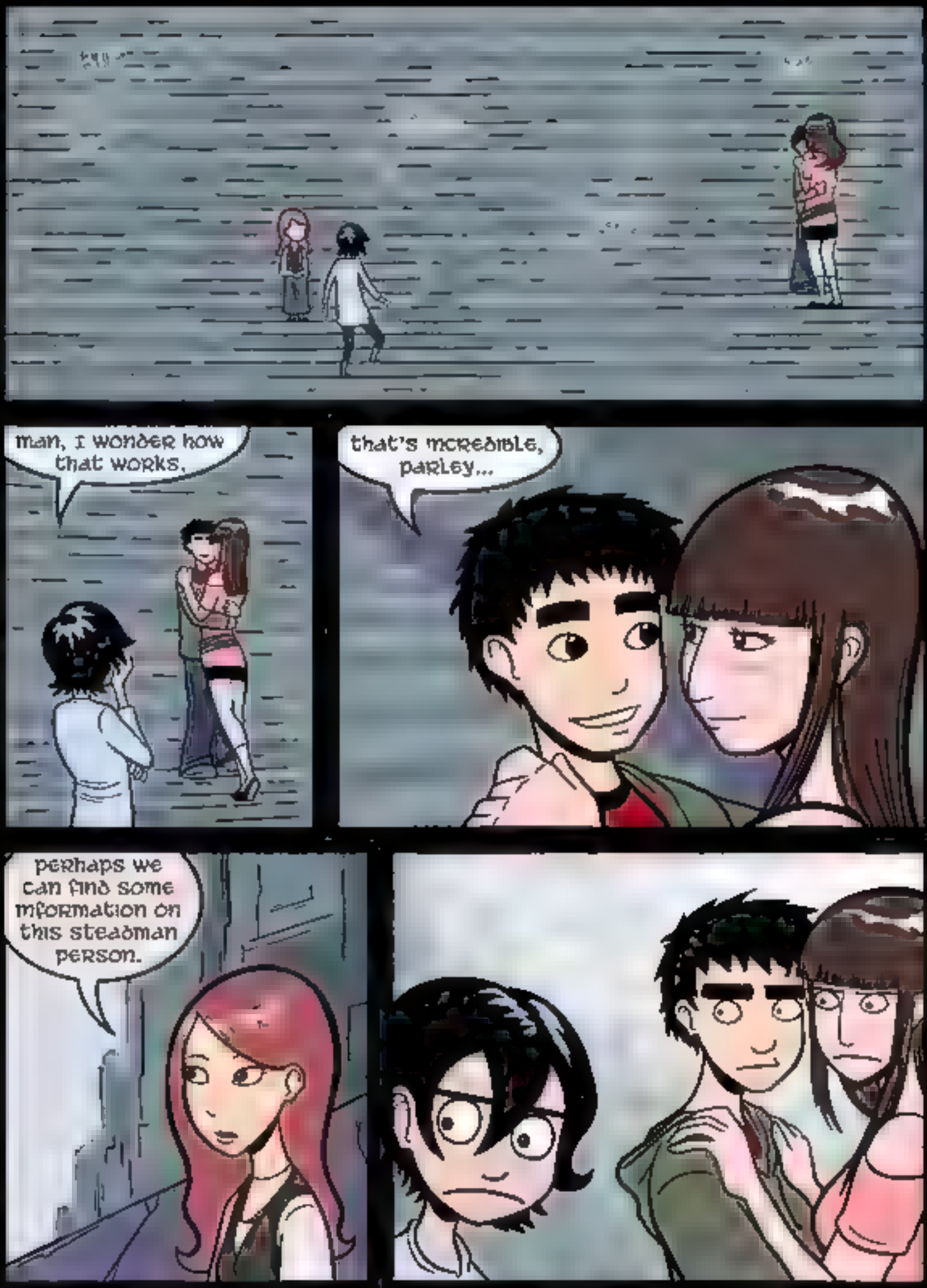
hey! woah!
oh god! what was that?!
what the hell was that?!
parley?
careful!
parley! are you okay?!

parley, you're crying.
I-I felt everything she did... she loved him so much...
she shouldn't have done that...
a ghost shouldn't do that...
It's not fair...
what happened? are you hurt?
no, thanks to parley she saved us
saved me
but... a fencer like that could have killed us in a heartbeat...
oh god, you saw jeanne?!
is that her name?

how do you know about her?
30 chapters worth of exposition later
we have to tell someone about all this!
no. the court killed Jeanne and tried to wipe out her memory
I'm not sure they'd want it brought up again...
what about Ms. Jones? you said she doesn't take sides or something?
don't tell anyone about her
not until I can see her again.

I know what she was thinking. she thought I was a coward...
because I wouldn't let myself believe I was in love with andrew.
and nobody calls me a coward.
man, it sounds weird when you call me andrew.

so.
I think that device is keeping Jeanne stuck down there.
yeah. maybe if we can get it somehow, she can move on
well I think I can get us down there. I just gotta...
BIP
woops!
BIP
haha, I think I get it now


man, I wonder how that works.
that's incredible, parley...
perhaps we can find some information on this steadman person.

okay! well! looks like it's time to go!
but we should think of a plan!
we can do that some other time!
but we're all here now!
are you guys gonna teleport off somewhere?
I-I think we're going to stay out here a while.
yeah?
yeah.

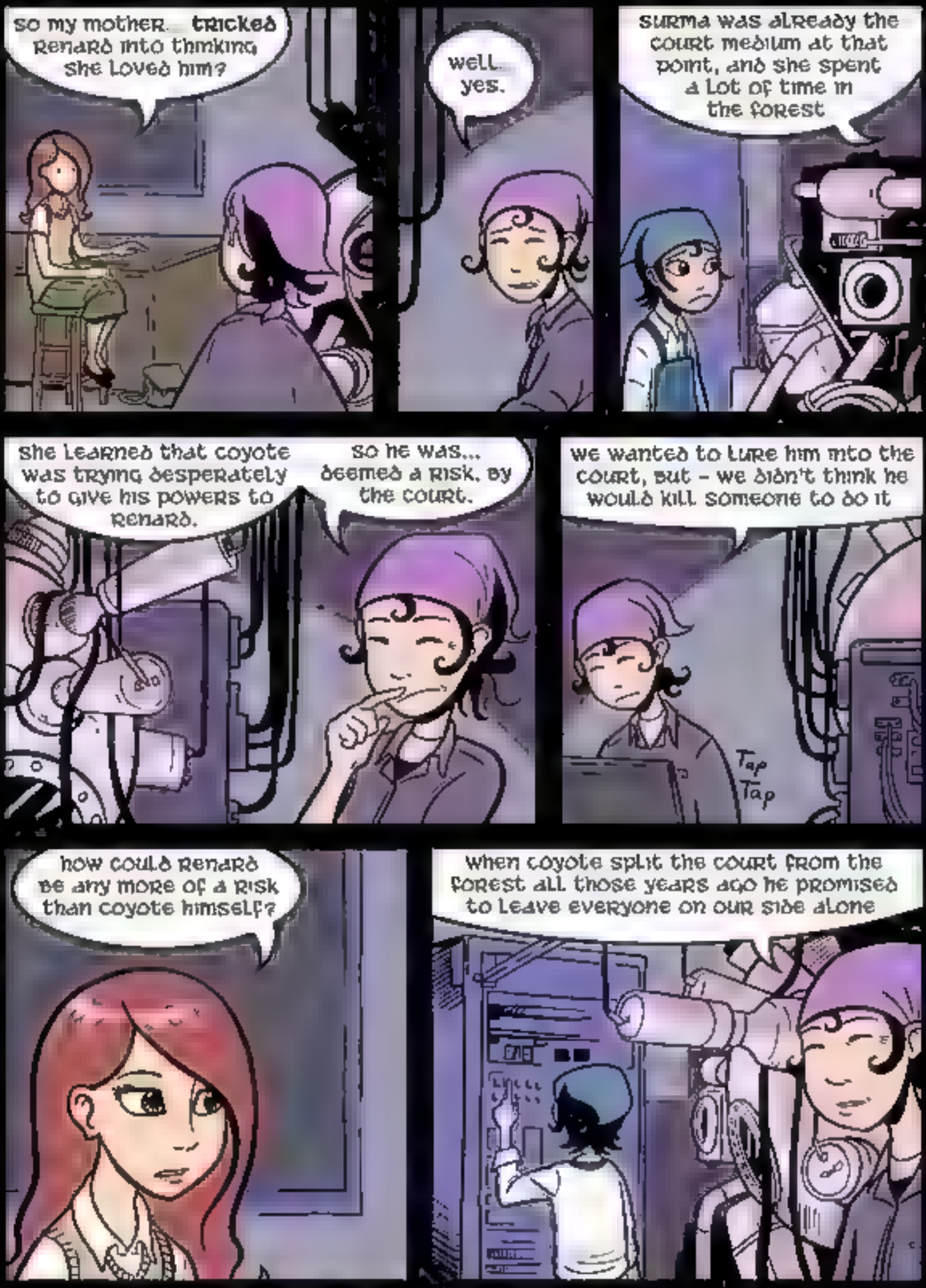
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 31:

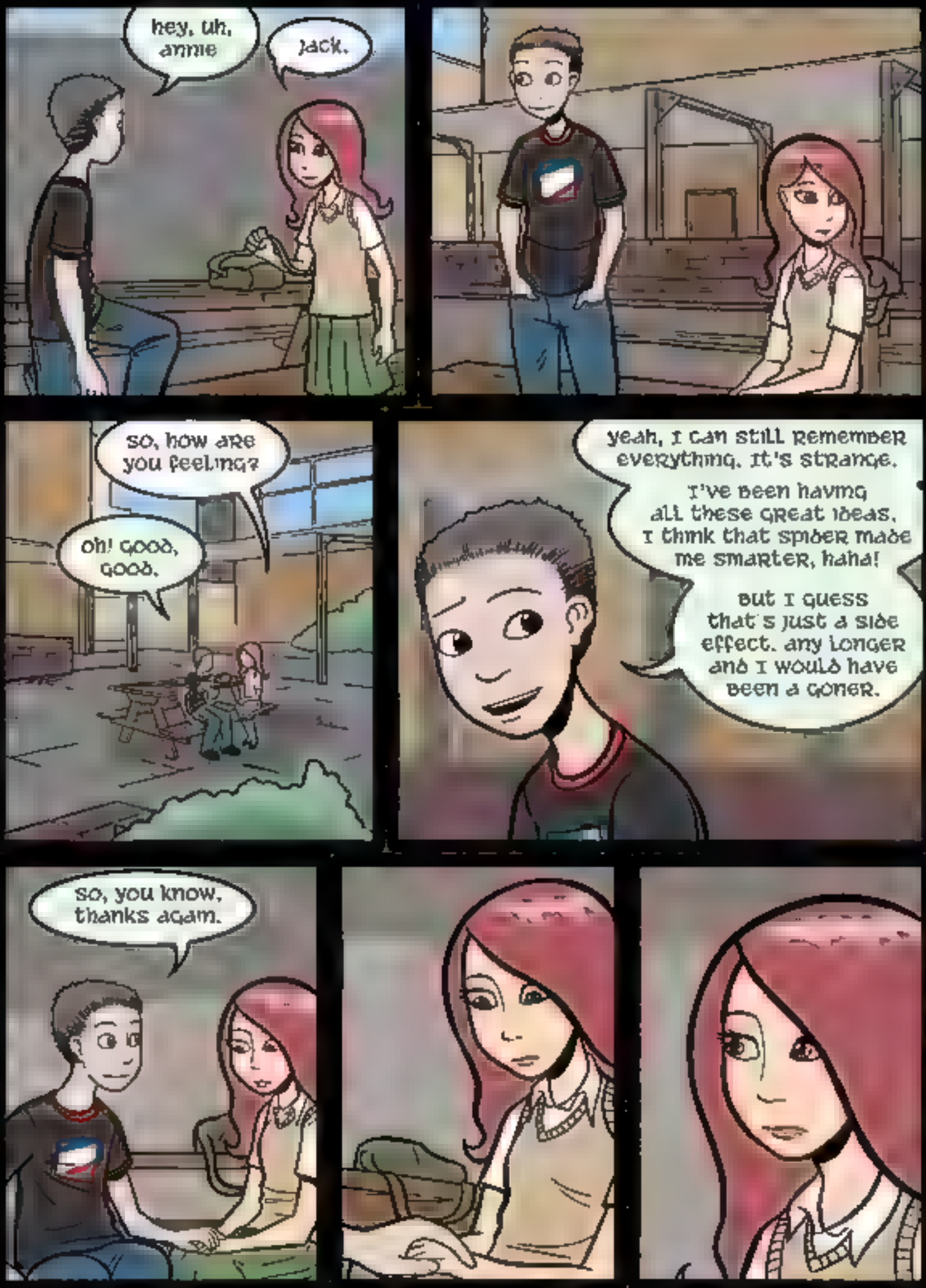
Fire Spike

Renard!
hey, Renard!
Good day, fair Lady!
haha!
watch this!
very impressive!
and such a good view from down here!
easy now, Reynarôme!
Reynarôme?
what name is this?

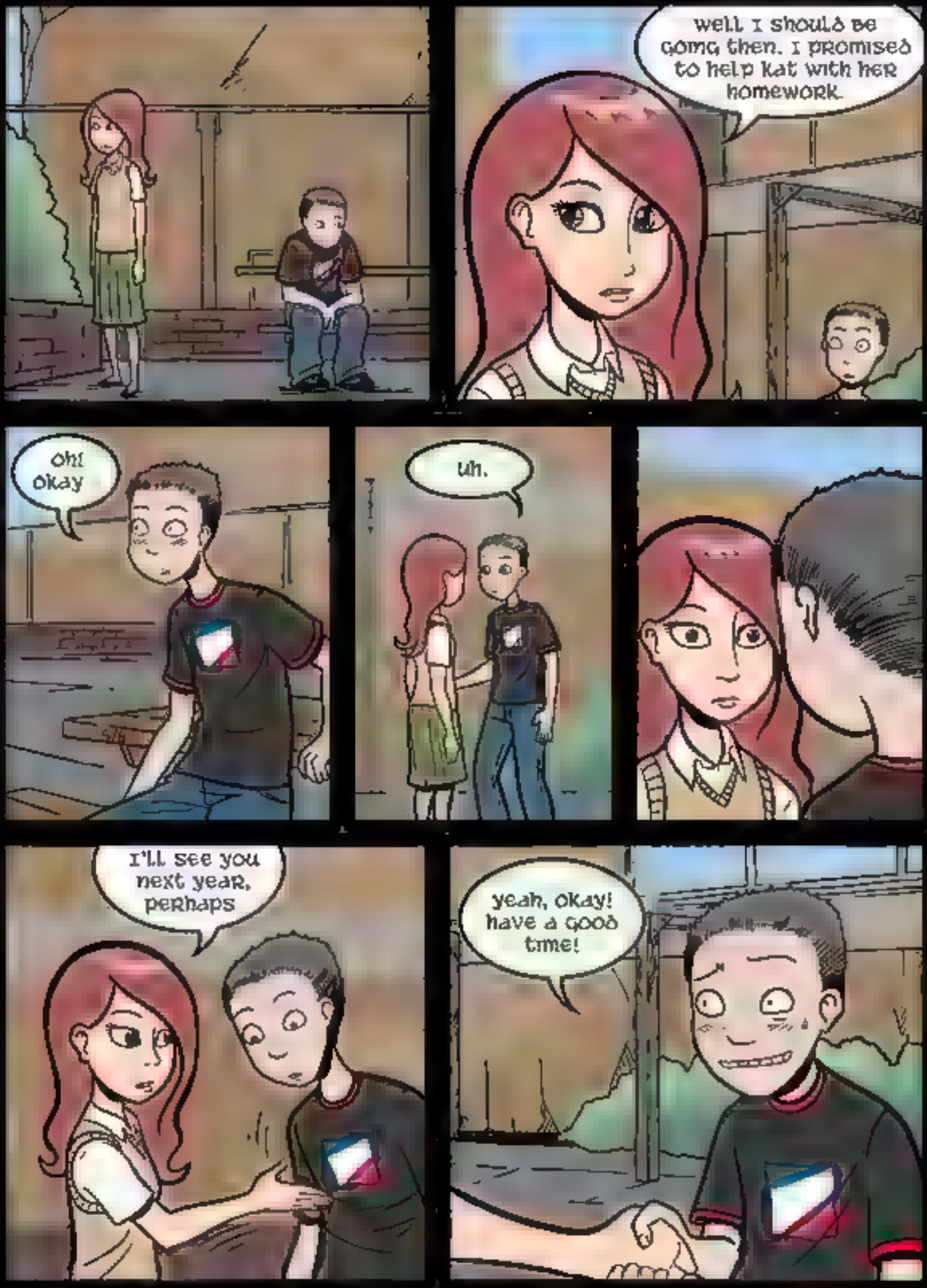
It's the name of a demon who steals the hearts of young girls.
then...
have I captured your heart?
Surma, I . I love you!
watch how high I can go!


so my mother... tricked Renard into thinking she loved him?
well... yes.
Surma was already the court medium at that point, and she spent a lot of time in the forest
she learned that coyote was trying desperately to give his powers to Renard.
so he was... deemed a risk, by the court.
we wanted to lure him into the court, but - we didn't think he would kill someone to do it
Tap Tap
how could Renard be any more of a risk than coyote himself?
when coyote split the court from the forest all those years ago he promised to leave everyone on our side alone

But Ysengrim...
Coyote would never give him too much power.
He barely even recognises his existence.
But, we thought we should tell you because it's important Renard doesn't find out. he must stay in the court. that's why you can't bring him with you when we leave this weekend.
But Rey isn't, like... a bad guy. I mean, he wouldn't hurt anyone now, right?
Well he almost killed Anme. Besides, it's what the court has decided, and they want him to stay
Speaking of this weekend, I must head back and pack some more
and I need to finish a little bit of homework to hand in tomorrow
I'll swing by later and we'll get something to eat!


hey, uh, annie
jack.
so, how are you feeling?
oh! good, good.
yeah, I can still remember everything. it's strange.
I've been having all these great ideas. I think that spider made me smarter, haha!
but I guess that's just a side effect. any longer and I would have been a goner.
so, you know, thanks again.

so.
you're off with the donLans for the summer?
yes. we're going to scotland, then to paris.
sounds great!
yes.
do you... have any plans?
nah. I'm staying here. my dad's working on some research project
he said he knew your mum.
oh?
yeah, he said she was real nice
I see


well I should be going then. I promised to help kat with her homework.
oh! okay
uh.
I'll see you next year, perhaps
yeah, okay! have a good time!

Katerina Donlan
Homework Book

RVER
hello renar~
[illegible] you are!
I've been looking over your work and it's a shambles!
I thought this was supposed to be handed in tomorrow? how can you expect to finish it all?!
don't tell me you're going to copy katerina's work again!

she said I could.
you always say that!
what gives you the right to look through my work?
it's a good thing I did: katerina shouldn't let you copy her work all the time!
how are you ever going to think for yourself?
you're not my father, renard, so stop trying to act like it.
well!
if I was, maybe I'd have done a better job than that man!

I don't know what surma ever saw in him.
what trickery he must have played to lure her away from me
my poor surma
they loved each other!
ha!
your father was incapable of feeling anything other than disdain!
he-he dedicated his life to curing my mother's illness
pfft! and what good did it do him?
unable to save his own wife
what sort of man would-
she never loved you.

she tricked you! the court wanted to capture you and you fell for it!
wh-
why would you say such a cruel thing?
it's true!
how could she ever love a creature like you?
bu-but I know she
you can only speak the truth when you talk to me, right?
and now you know the truth! so let me hear you say it!
she surma lo- she l....
you can't say it, can you?!
no! don't you change! stay as you are!

you think you're smarter than my father, do you?
well look who was tricked!
and you killed that man just like you were going to kill me!
my mother and father left and lived their lives together, leaving you trapped here.
I know he loved her because he could think of nothing else but working to cure her!
what? speak up!
I know why she was like that.

what...
you are the reason surma died!
when I said you had a fire in you that belonged to your mother, I was speaking the truth!
you took that spirit, that fire, when you were born, and the stronger you grew, the weaker she became!
that's why no guide would claim her!
there was nothing to take!
we all knew it would happen!
even your damned father
especially him!
he knows she died because of you!

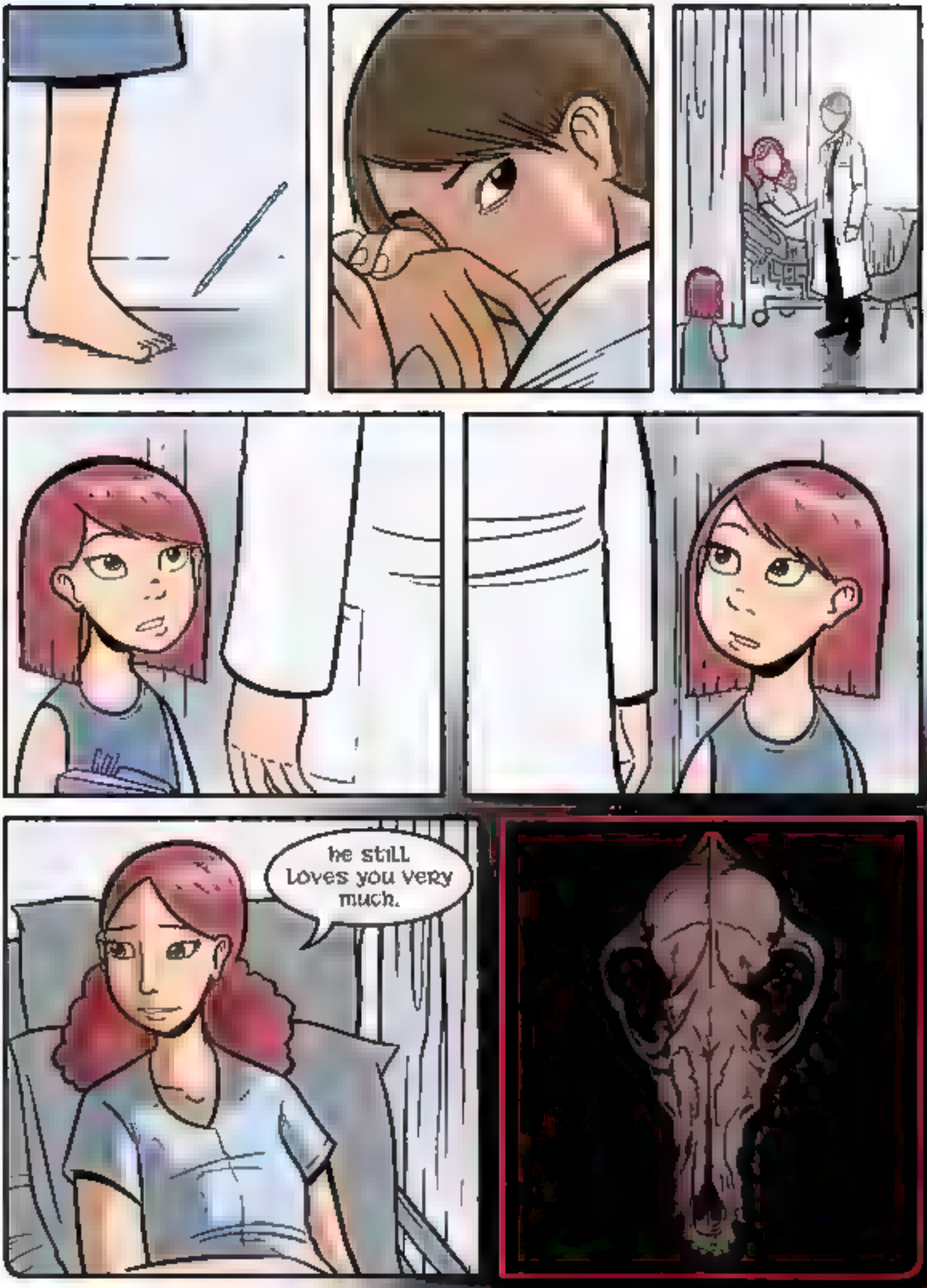
they they knew?
...
anja... eglamore
my father.
we all knew it would happen
...if surma ever had a child.

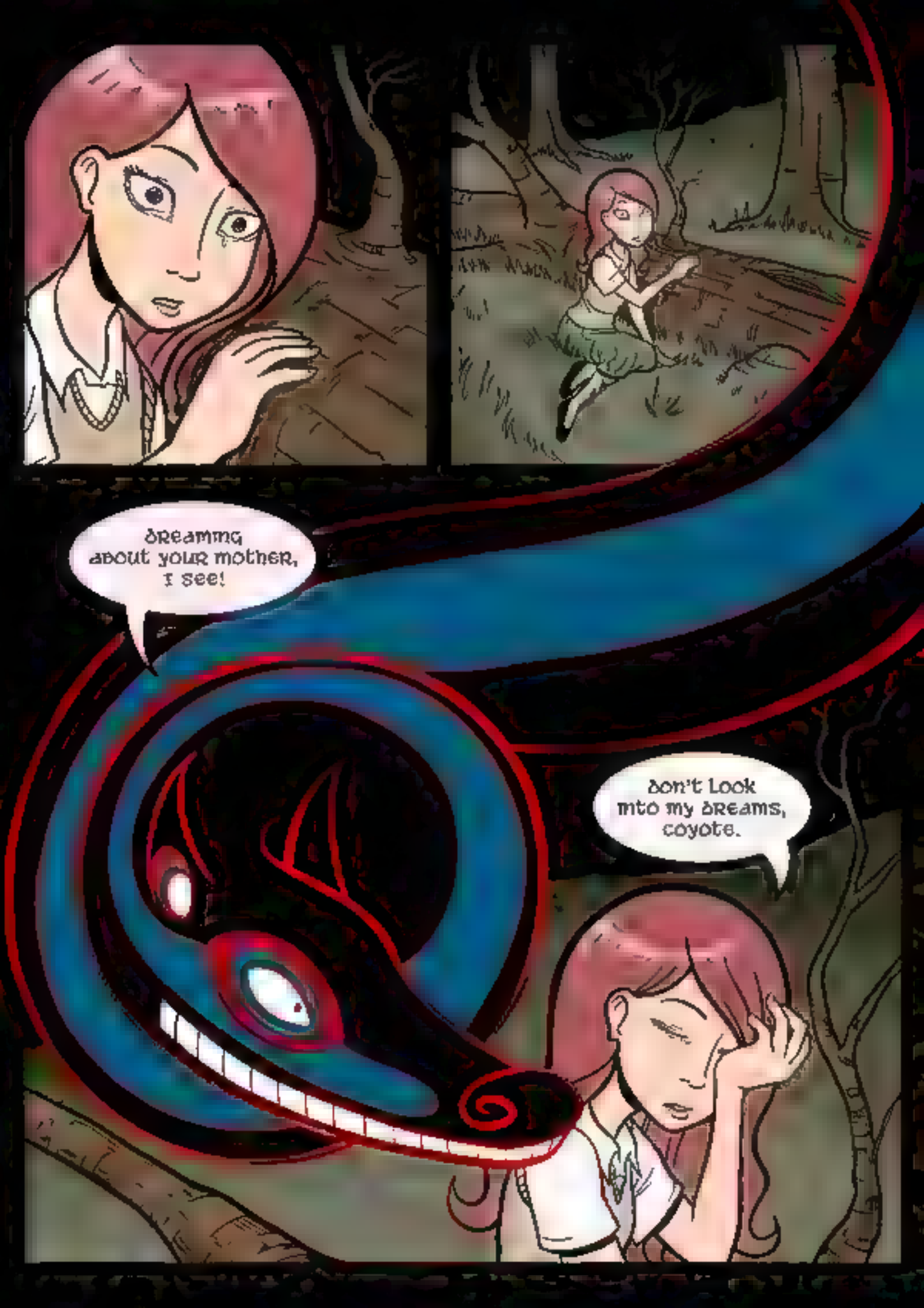
WEEEEEEEE
!

KRK
damn it

I'm sorry for trespassing, ysengrm.
It's just that I-
you are here because you are weak.
you are crymg because you are weak.
I have little patience for weakness.

ysengrim
why do I never see other creatures in the forest?
only shadow people.
they do not want to be seen. they are scared of you.
of me? why?
because you come from that place.
I would never hurt them.
they do not know that


he still loves you very much.


Dreaming about your mother, I see!
Don't look into my dreams, coyote.

you really should warn us of your visits, fire head girl.
I'm sorry, coyote
now, to what do we owe
antimony
ms. jones!
wandering eye!
so many visitors today!
I'm here for the girl.
what did she call you? miss jones? is that the latest name you've stolen, wandering eye?
just jones will do.

you should come back with me, antimony.
a little strange for you to be making demands of people, wandering eye!
now I'm interested!
you're making a mistake.
I want to hear what she has to say!
she's not going anywhere she doesn't want to!
you know I can take her if I wish.
are we getting into this again, wandering eye?
coyote, m-my mother tricked renard into being captured by the court!

you think I don't know a ruse when I see one?
of course I knew Renard was tricked!
what?!
he was a fool, blinded by love! It was his own fault!
how could you leave him trapped there?!
there was a time when I was interested in stealing him back
but when I saw him there with you, fire head girl, I knew I would not get him back through trickery
it's not the missing laws of man that keep him there, but his love for you!

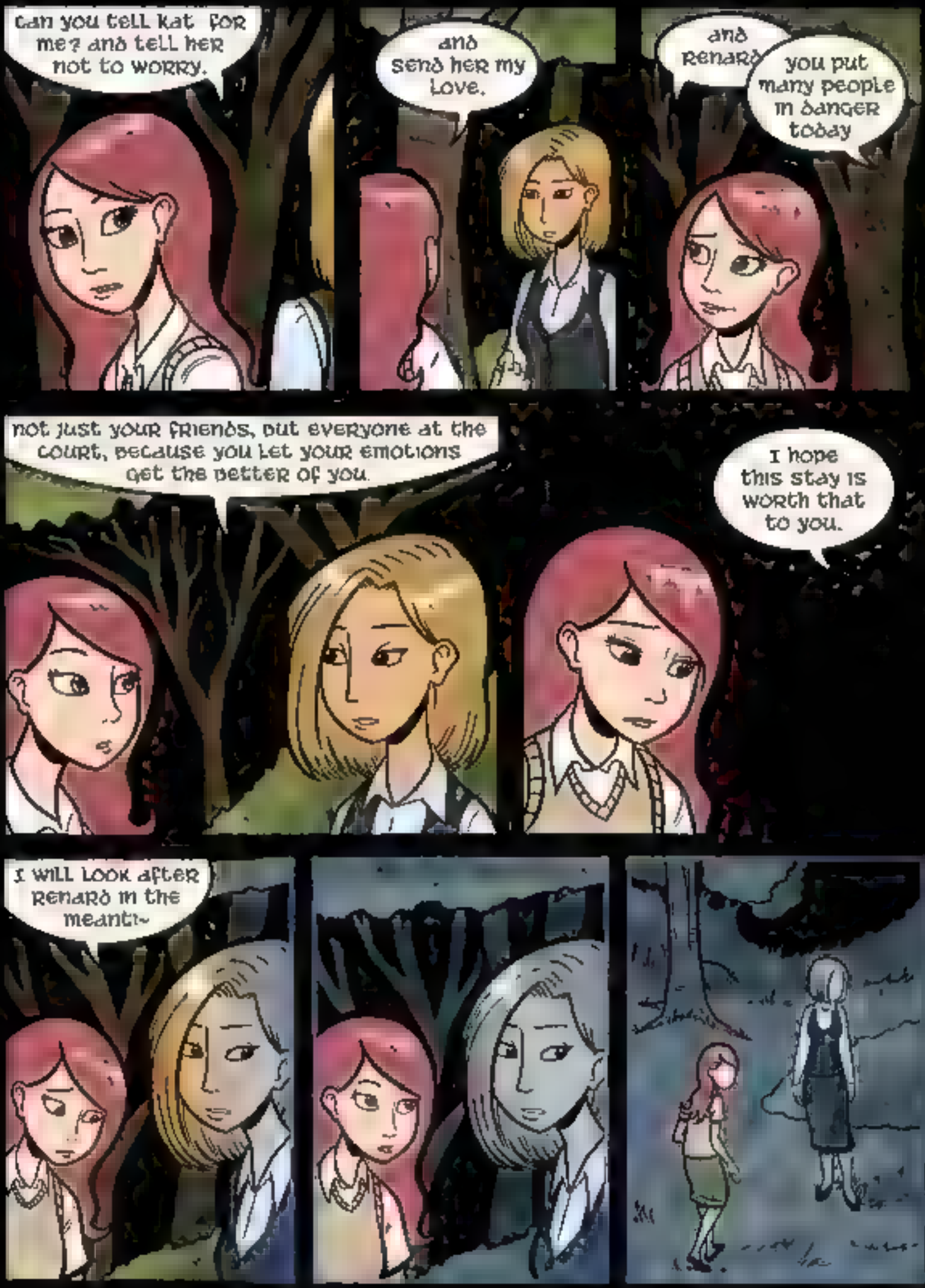
oh, how his heart must have broken when he first saw you!
what do you mean?
to see you apart from your mother, he would have known surma passed on!
you know about that too? why did it happen?!
..
oh, wandering eye...
don't tell me no one has told the girl she isn't exactly human!

what what did you say?
did you not think it strange how easily you control the ether?
fire head girl, let me ask you; when surma was alive, you were by her side at all times, yes?
yes, we... couldn't bear to be apart.
and her condition worsened as you grew?
...
It is the fate of your kind, I'm afraid. the flame that burned inside her was passed onto you.
just as will happen when you have a child!

then... what am I?
oh, you're mostly human
but long ago? your ancestors were some manner of fire elemental, I suspect
what an interesting first union that must have been! hahaha!
I admire man's ability to see beauty in everything!
even a flame!
you are much... calmer than your mother, however
her father's influence, perhaps?
Nod
but still, deep inside you
do you sometimes feel your temper flaring?

perhaps if you had somewhere to learn to control your inner feelings...
that's enough, coyote.
what are you talking about?
you could stay here!
spend some time under the wide sky and the rustling branches of my forest, instead of being forever trapped behind crumbling walls!
I can stay here?
I will allow it!
this has not been agreed by anyone.
it is agreed by the girl and I! who else need there be? or are you truly working only in favour of the court, wandering eye?

I will grant her every protection!
Ysengrm will look after her!
But...!
I question his sanity
Hahahaha!
We can also find her a nice family to stay with while she is here!
It is a rare opportunity, wandering eye! I can almost feel how anxious you are to weasel off back to the court and convince them of the strategic advantages!
I... I think I would like to stay just for the summer?
Very well
then it is settled!


can you tell kat for me? and tell her not to worry.
and send her my love.
and renard
you put many people in danger today
not just your friends, but everyone at the court, because you let your emotions get the better of you.
I hope this stay is worth that to you.
I will look after renard in the meanti~

J-Jones?
Fire head girl.
What's happening?
I have stopped time.
I see you don't have the tooth I gave you.
No, I left it in my room.
Hmm, good, good.
Show me your right hand.
If you tell anyone in the forest about the tooth
even Ysengrin
this bind will snip off your hand.

So you understand?
Wh-I but ..
Good.
And I will return once in a while to see how you are doing.
Is this acceptable?
y-yes, okay

well then!
I will go on ahead and inform everyone of our new guest!
bring her along, ysengrin, and we will find her a home for the summer!
this way
oh.. okay

do not worry about the binding.
it will not harm you as long as you do what coyote says.
oh...
I'm a little nervous
you will be treated with kindness
kindness "encouraged" by coyote?
maybe

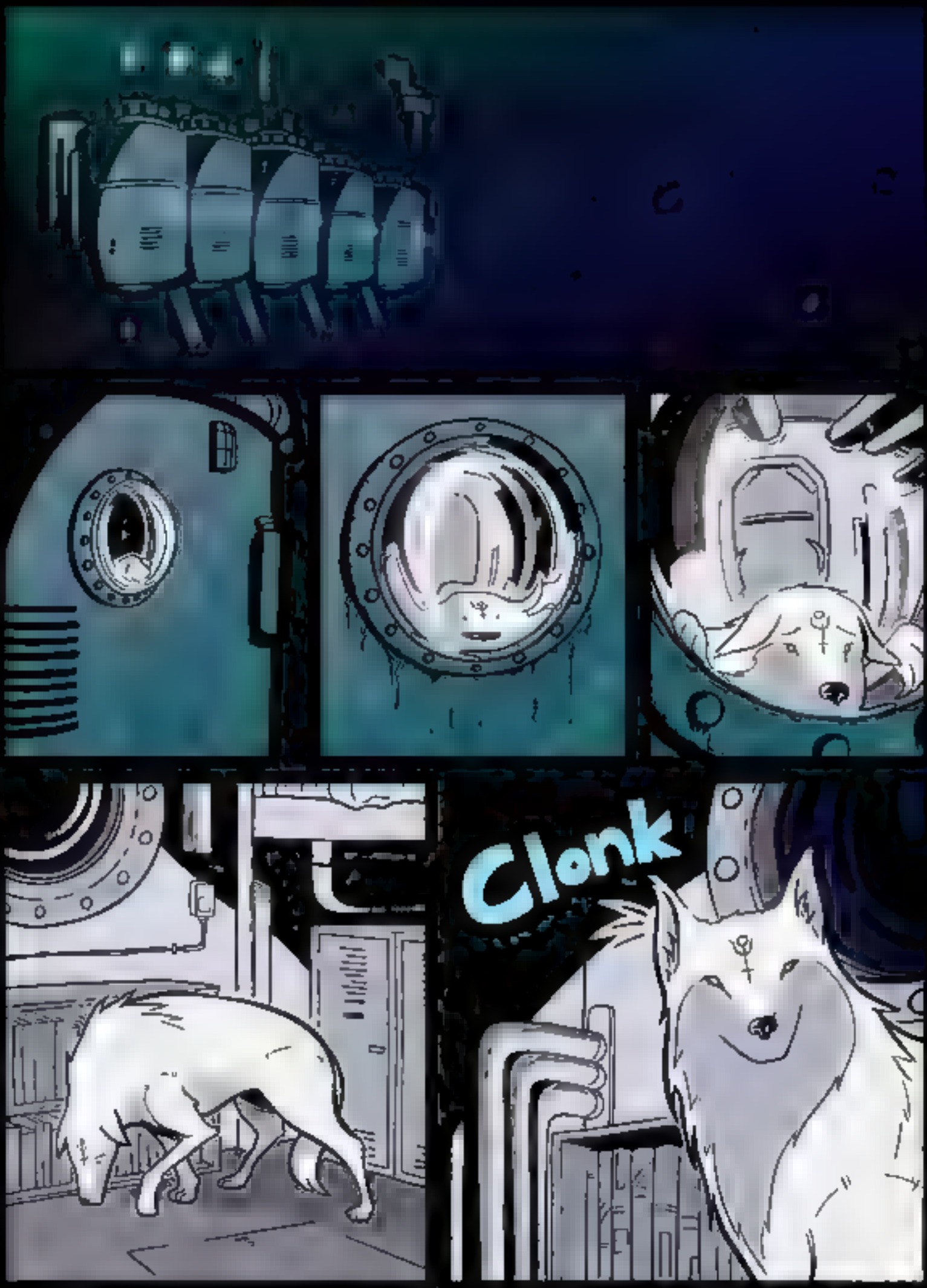
I was correct before.
you were weak, and you ran away.
but it is understandable, considering what you learned.
now you can take this knowledge and turn it into a part of yourself.
let it solidify inside you and make you stronger
let it straighten your back.
you did not take surma's life, she gave it to you.
a gift beyond possession. beyond kno-gak!
oh, ysengrin!

you are stronger than you were this morning
even if it does not feel that way.
and you will become stronger still..
strong enough to walk on your own

show them you are not afraid.

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 32: From the Forest She Came


Clonk

RENARD...
CHILD...
WAG WAG
OH! YOU SMELL LIKE THE FOREST!
HAHA!

Look at you!
you stayed with the anwyn? I know them!
yes! khepi had a baby boy!
good for them!
oh, wait...
coyote put a bmamg on you?
what for?
the tooth he gave me... he didn't want me telling anyone about it.
there's no telling what that fool is up to. I kept the tooth safe for you.
and... I put katerina's homework book back in her room after you... left.
oh um. thank you.
I'm so sorry for what I said.

no, no, I'm glad you told [redacted].
but I pushed you to it
I wish I hadn't been so cruel to you, Renard.
you know.. if you wanted to leave...
to go back to the forest
I would let you. I don't care what the court thinks.
don't-don't ask that of me.
Surma may not have loved me as I thought, but what I felt was real.
and those feelings have not gone away.
Besides, who else would look after you?
I love you too, Renard.

so, these are the new dorms?
KONK
yes I'm sure I saw something swimming out there
jones moved all your belongings here herself. I made sure everything was accounted for.
I'm glad you were safe with her. ysengrin explained what she is to me.
or tried to, anyway
hmm, she can be interesting company.
is... anyone else here yet?
no, you're the first arrival.
but katerina's room is next to yours.
she should be here any moment!
SRZG
I have no idea what this thing does.

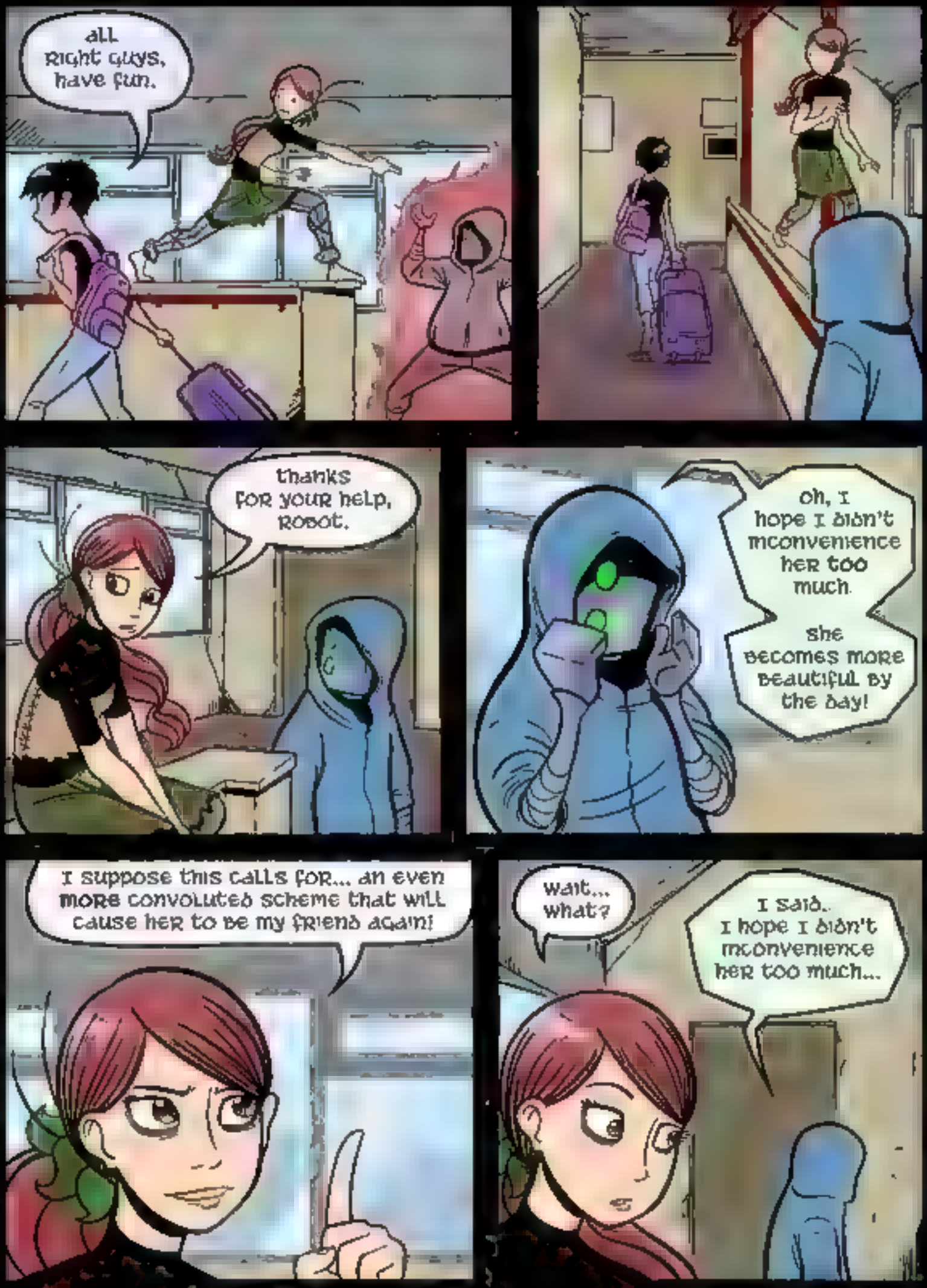
kat!
hey, annie.
rey.
kat, I made these for you.
right. okay

look, I gotta go get more of my stuff
kat.. are you okay? I'm so sorry about the summer holiday
did you have a nice time?
annie, when I heard you ran off, I was devastated
I felt so bad. so did my mum. she thought it was her fault
then I heard... you know, the reason you ran off and I was so worried.
then that jones lady said you were staying in the forest.
we went on holiday and I spent a long time worrying about you..
but mainly I wished you were there with me
and you know... I even felt a little angry that you'd ditch like that.
and that made me feel even worse
now I don't know what to think

kat, I'm so sorry...
I know, annie. I know you're sorry.
It's not like you planned this. It's just ..
I dunno...
sometimes...
you kinda make it hard to be your friend.
Splish

hey, ROBOT! how's it going?
I. will help you with. your. bags. human girl!
uh
hey!
Kick
must. annoy...
must cause. inconvenience!

kat!
robot has gone mad!
I fear he may be possessed!
I've trapped him with my blinker stone, but I need your help!
perhaps you need to... reverse .. his polarity?
hack?
do some hacking?


all right guys, have fun.
thanks for your help, robot.
oh, I hope I didn't inconvenience her too much.
she becomes more beautiful by the day!
I suppose this calls for... an even more convoluted scheme that will cause her to be my friend again!
wait... what?
I said.. I hope I didn't inconvenience her too much...

hi kat!
shadow!
say, are you, like, upset at annie or something?
no... I dunno. why, what's she put you up to?
I'm supposed to tell you she's been kidnapped by evil dino-demons.
aw jeez, sorry about that.
no worries. hope you two patch things up.
elsewhere
I don't know, annie. I don't think kat's gonna fall for it.
you need to make yourself look more evil, mort.
more horns?

woah! rockin' goatee, baz!
why thank you!
lemme guess, annie needs my help with something?
... mad fairy uprising?
haha!
are you two fighting?
naw, we're not fighting. I'm not even really upset with her.
well she cares about you a lot. she's running all over the place trying to set things right
yeah, I know. she's being pretty sweet about-
hey, fats mcgee! be friends with lady tubsalot again!

soon
also
and so
enough already!
aw, what am I doing. I know she's just trying to say sorry.
I shouldn't keep her hanging like this.
Splish

haha!
okay, annie.
now I'm
impressed!

look, annie, I accept your apology, okay? I just didn't know how to feel.
I wish we could have gone on holiday together, sure, but I totally understand how upset you must have been.
I hope you know you could have talked to me about it..
I really missed you.
oh, there you are! what is this thing? It's seriously creeping me out, haha.

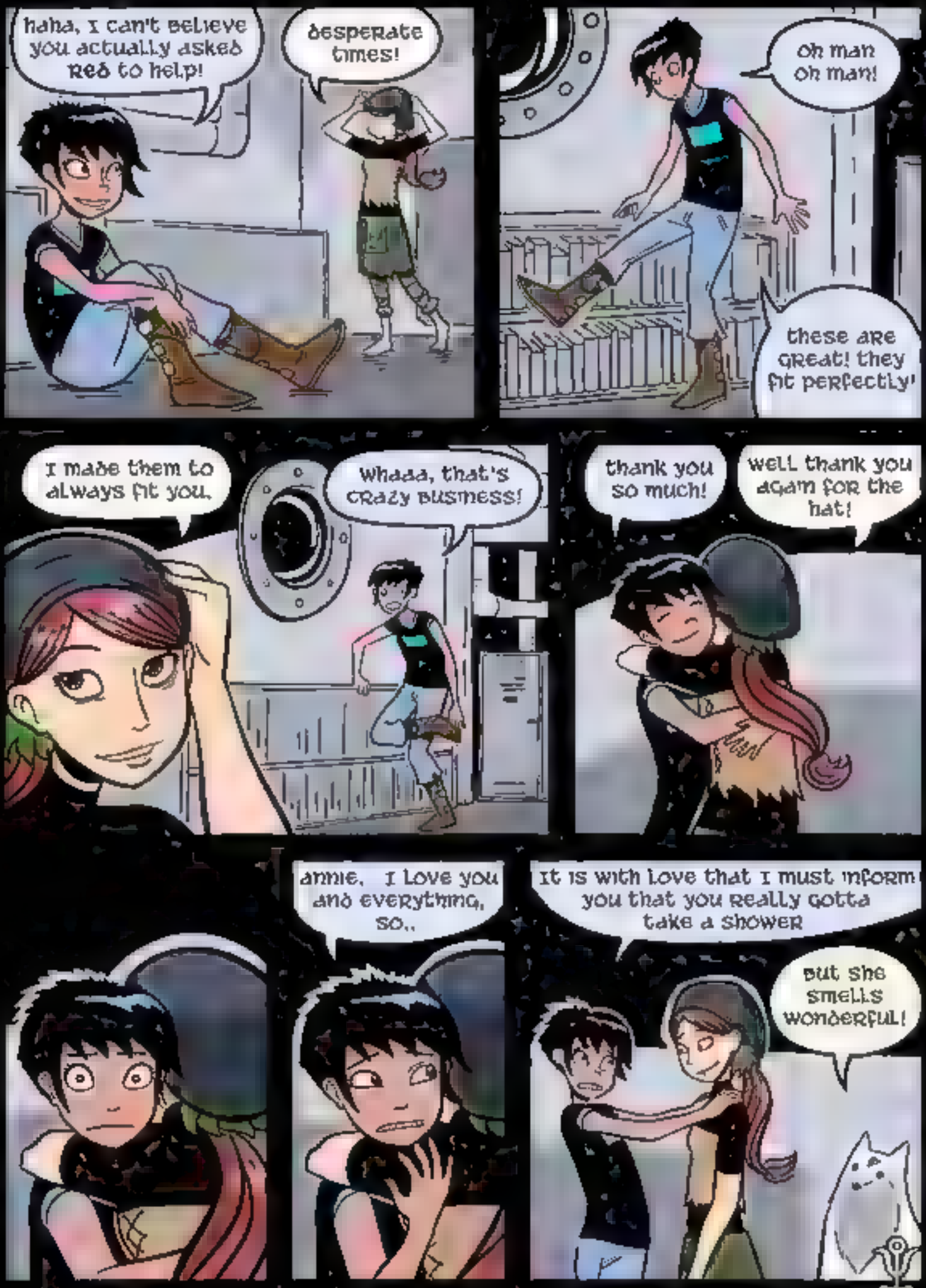
Waaah!
ahhh! I touched it!
with my hand!
what could it be?! I've never heard of such a creature!
oh no...
I thought that was a swimming pool in our dorms...
but it's a moon pool!
that sounds lovely but I don't see...
it opens out to the water in the tank!
SHFFF

kat! stay behind me!
what's going on out here?!
renard! look out!
what? oh.
ah!
TAKKA
TAK
OKAY THAT IS QUITE ENOUGH THANK YOU

GIRLS, this is Lindsey. We met while you were galavanting about.
SORRY I DIDNT INTRODUCE MYSELF EARLIER I WAS AT WORK
you work here?
THE COURT EMPLOYS ME AS A CONSULTANT YES I HAVE A PHD IN STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
Why would they uh... put you in our tank?
WELL TECHNICALLY YOU ARE IN MY TANK
I HELPED DESIGN YOUR DORMS I KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS MAKE SURE YOU HAVENT SPRUNG A LEAK HAHA
Tak Tak
THATS NOT LIKELY TO HAPPEN BY THE WAY
Tic-a-tac! Tic! Tac!
Tic Tac!

RENARD TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR SITUATION ITS THE START OF A NEW YEAR AND IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF FRIENDS DIDNT EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER
I agree!
haha! okay!
something to think about!
oh my god. so creepy
kat ..
I don't know how else to apologise..

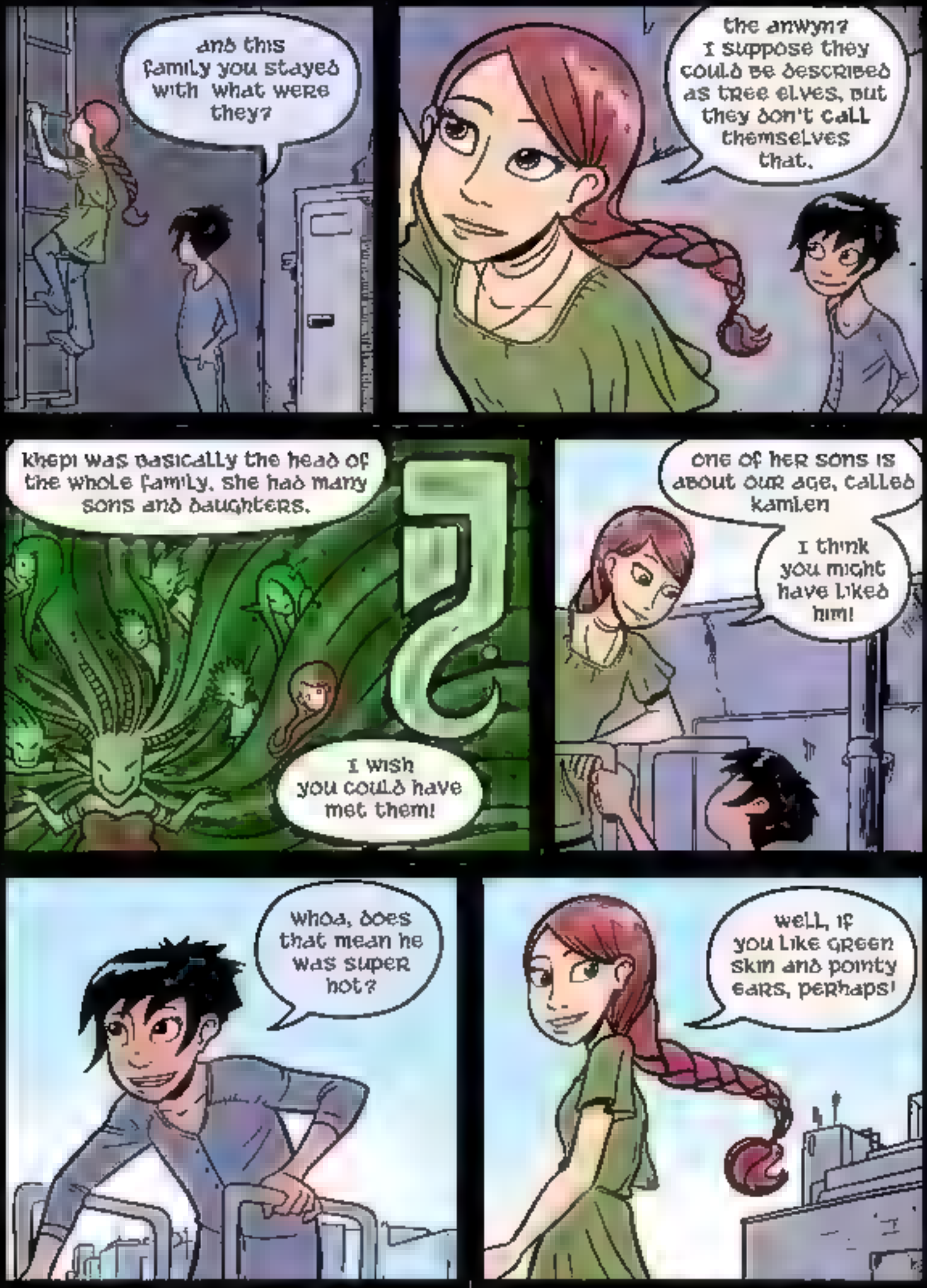
Anne, you don't have to apologise I'm not mad at you.
I thought I needed some space from you when I got back, but that didn't help.
I mean, I've not even seen you for six weeks!
I really am sorry, Kat. I ran away without thinking. It was a weak and selfish thing for me to have done.
I... I didn't exactly help in that department.
Renard...
Look, don't worry about it, guys.
the super giant sea monster was right. I just want to go back to being friends.
also, I love the Princess Mononoke look you got going on!
my what?
?


haha, I can't believe you actually asked Red to help!
desperate times!
oh man oh man!
these are great! they fit perfectly!
I made them to always fit you.
Whaaa, that's crazy business!
thank you so much!
well thank you again for the hat!
annie. I love you and everything, so..
It is with love that I must inform you that you really gotta take a shower
but she smells wonderful!

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 33:

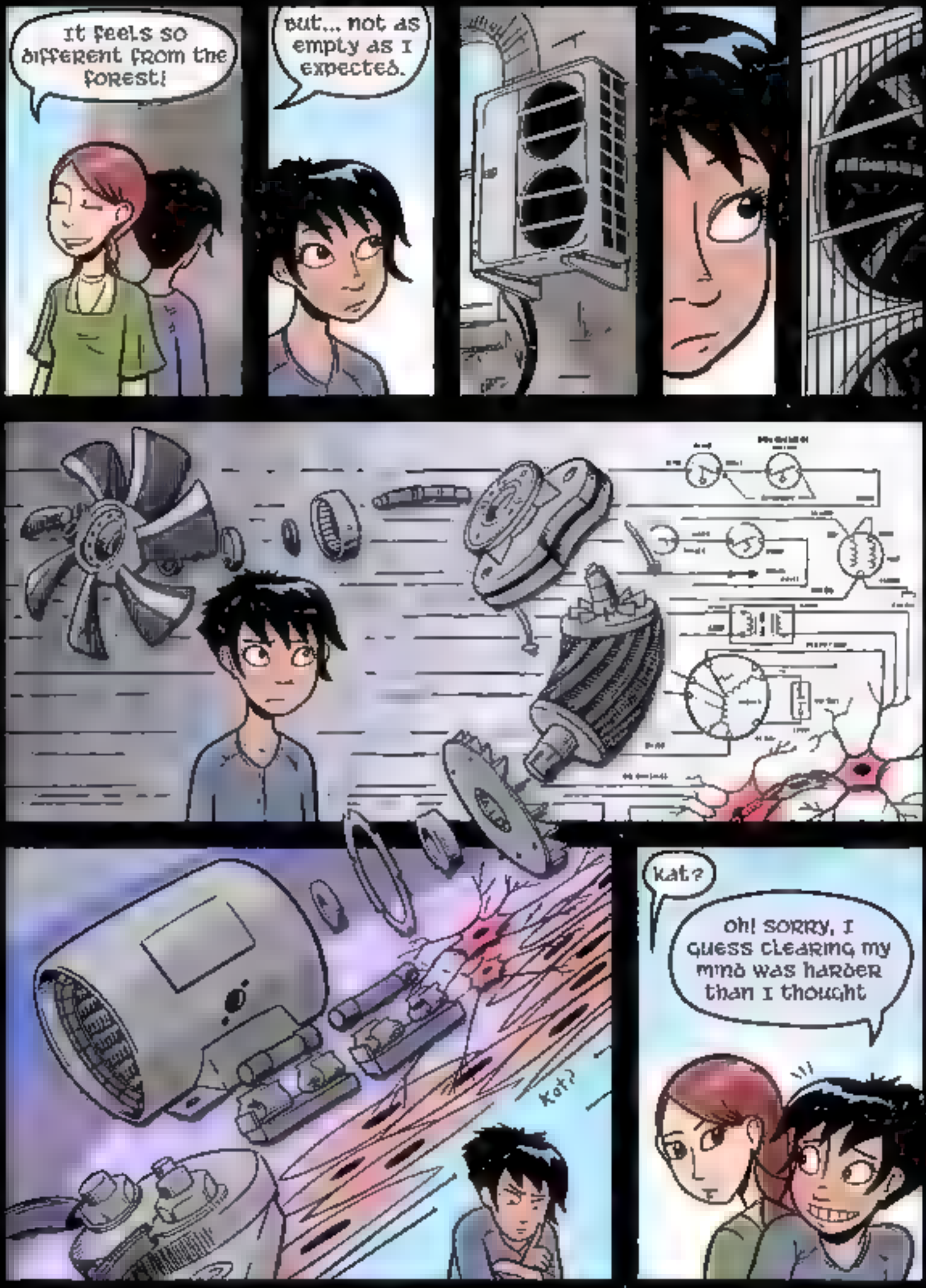
Give and Take


and this family you stayed with what were they?
the anwyn? I suppose they could be described as tree elves, but they don't call themselves that.
khepi was basically the head of the whole family. she had many sons and daughters.
I wish you could have met them!
one of her sons is about our age, called kamlen
I think you might have liked him!
whoa, does that mean he was super hot?
well, if you like green skin and pointy ears, perhaps!

ysengrin and I spent most of our time together in silence.
It was .. nice.
didn't he try to kill you at one point?
so did renard.
and jeanne.
maybe I just bring that out in people.
uh...
It was a joke.
well, I don't want to kill you.
thank you, kat.

I'm glad we could hang out like this.
I kinda thought you might be in trouble for running into the forest...
oh, I'm supposed to be in detention right now.
huh??
but I don't care. they know where I am if they want to find me.
what are they going to do, tell my parents?
haha!
I brought you up here because I wanted to show you something ysengrin taught me.
oh, cool
I wanted to share it with you.

you just need to sit still and close your eyes
feel the wind against your skin, and the smell of the air around you.
and the noise of the...
well, not the trees.
there aren't any trees
but the point is to clear your mind and listen.
okay, I can do that.
now see yourself from the inside.
uh...
and pull that part out, into the sky, and spread your arms out like wings!
hmm...


It feels so different from the forest!
but... not as empty as I expected.
Kat?
Kat?
oh! SORRY, I guess clearing my mind was harder than I thought

I wonder how the court was built.
Where did all this stuff come from?
I wondered that too.
I asked about it in the forest, but all they say is that "It grew from the seed bismuth".
yeah, everyone here just say the founders made it
huh what if it did grow? I mean, literally.
Imagine being able to GROW a building!
you know, this kinda links in to that idea I had about a new kind of robot...

I dunno, robot. Should you really be following her around like this?
It's... it's getting a little creepy
I am only making sure she is safe.
Of course she's safe
you do not have to stay with me, shadow.
they're our friends. we don't need to hide from them
but you're my friend too. I don't want you to be lonely.
you are also my good friend.
oh, they're leaving.

so your idea is to grow a robot?
not exactly...
but I was thinking about how bodies work, and how bones start out soft and fragile, but develop to be almost as strong as steel
I thought, maybe a structure could be grown and fused with, say, a muscular system.
not servos or motors, but something that works like a real muscle.
so what are we doing here, looking through diego's old things?
well, he somehow made machines that could move despite not having internal mechanisms like modern robots.
I figured it was about time to see how he did it!

okay, well. the good news is that I found a pattern.
the bad news is that all his work is written in gibberish.
I thought it might be in spanish, but it's not. It's just a bunch of symbols.
maybe he developed his own shorthand to keep his work secret?
yeah, maybe.
but here's the main thing. this heart symbol
every element of the old robots is linked to it. their limbs, their brains, everything.
it's basically where a power source or an engine should be.
time to look at one of the older models!

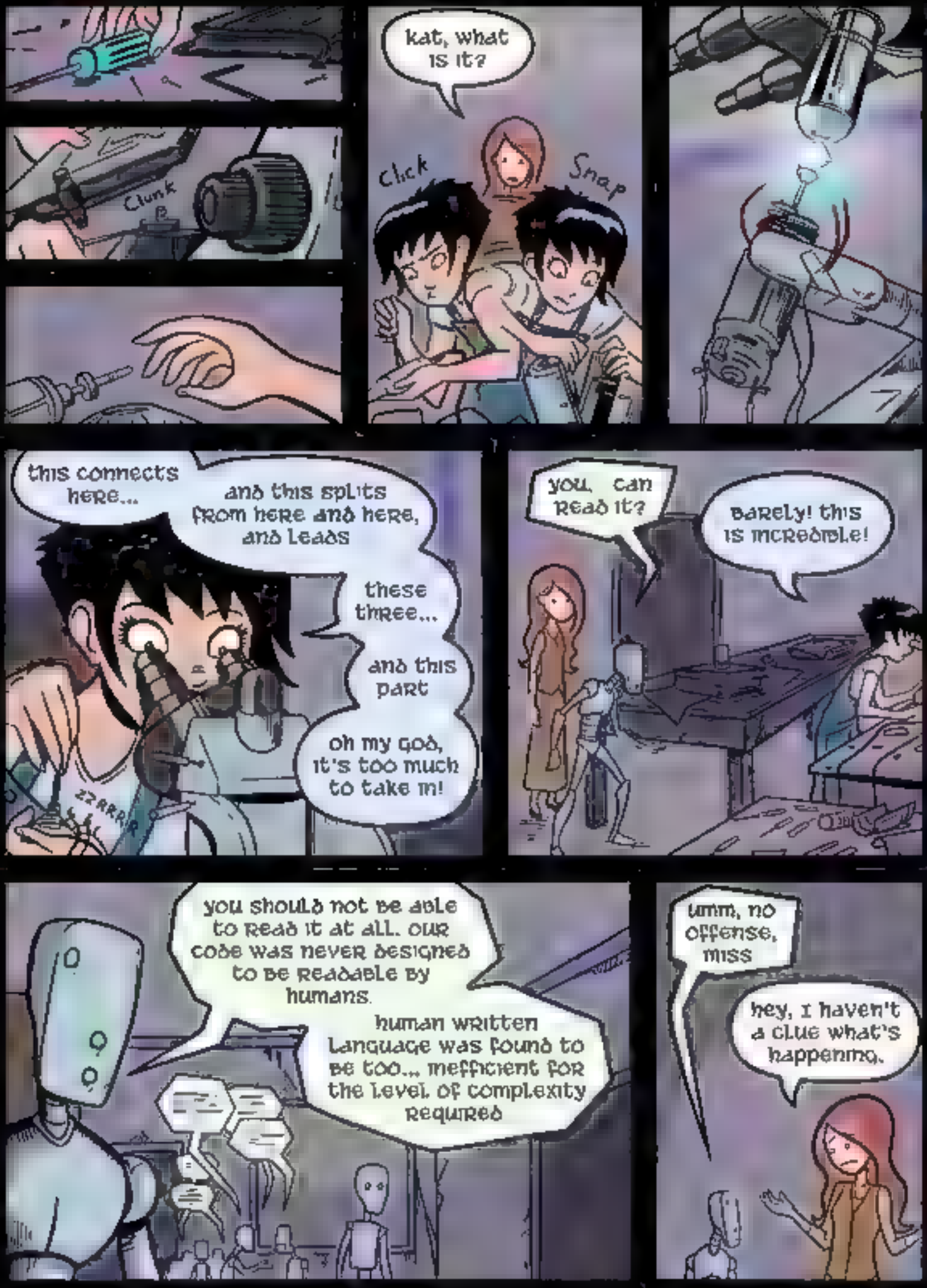
uh, how come you guys picked a creepy looking robot to be brought from downstairs?
creepy?
uh.... nevermind.
Let's get started!

here it is .. the heart.
It feels like a lump of ceramic, but...
yeah, take a look. It's covered in the same symbols as the schematics.
It's beautiful...
yeah, but what is it for?
kat .. what if these are not really robots in the modern sense, but golems?
huh? wha?
a golem is inanimate matter brought to life with a set of instructions
אמת
what if these hearts really do provide power, but through etheric means?

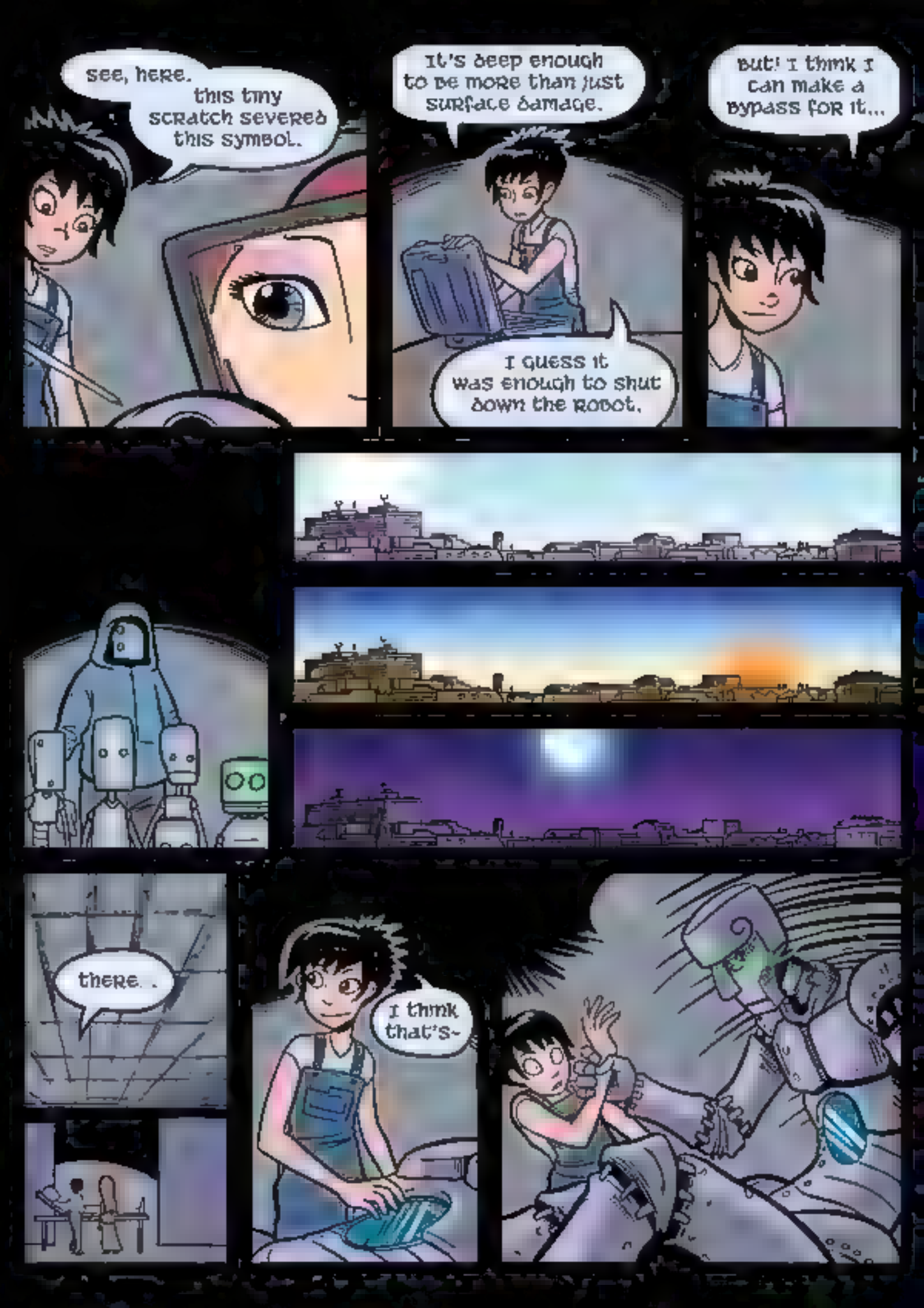
come on! golems are just fairytales!
they can't be real!
just as fire elementals can't be real?
no! I didn't mean it like that!
haha, it's okay.
but... this would mean diego was a magician, not a scientist.
not necessarily
what are the modern robots if not inanimate material given life with the instructions in their software?
um, no offence.
none taken
diego's work led to the creation of very real, tangible machines.
they may not be the same, but their inspiration came from him.
and you see the results before you now.
hmmm..

several days pass
yaaawn!
um. miss kat
hey
about that operating code you asked us to print...
oh right, yeah. I forgot about that.
just in time, too. I was running out of ideas I guess you guys did a better job of creating your own code based on diego's designs than I did.
where is it?
here

What is it?
It's... the only way our instruction code can be represented outside of conceptual space.
It cannot be printed on paper. this is only a small portion
Oh my god..
Oh my god!
this is incredible!

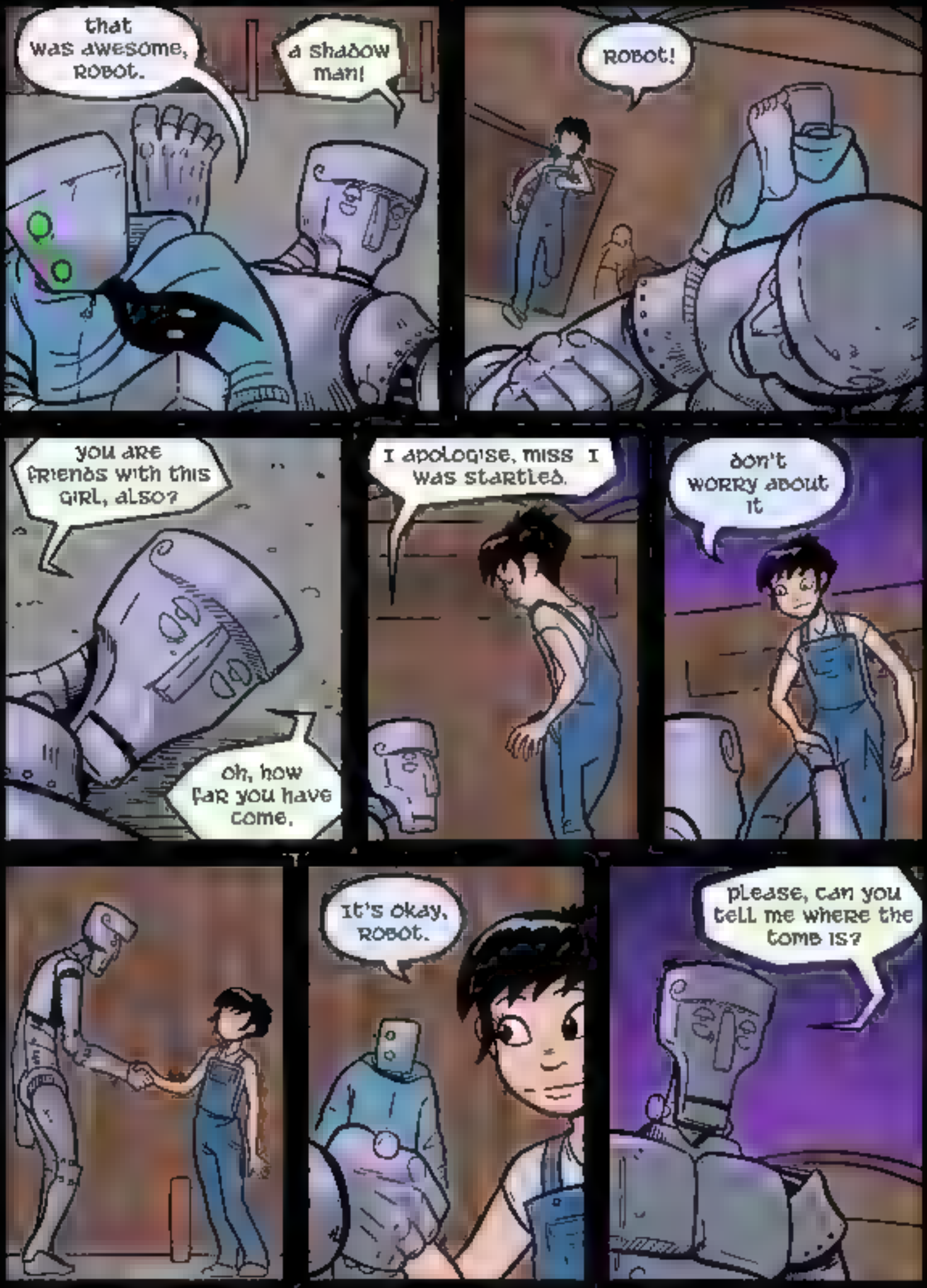

Clunk
kat, what is it?
Click
Snap
this connects here...
and this splits from here and here, and leads
these three...
and this part
oh my god, it's too much to take in!
zzRRRP
you can read it?
barely! this is incredible!
you should not be able to read it at all. our code was never designed to be readable by humans.
human written language was found to be too... meffficient for the level of complexity required
umm, no offense, miss
hey, I haven't a clue what's happening.

wait .
Scribble Scribble
ha! just writing these down is like trying to draw the mona lisa on a postage stamp with a car tyre!
the old git really was a genius...
kat, did you just figure out how the old robots work?
not at all. but this code of theirs is the bridge i needed to understand the theory behind diego's work.
and... i know how to get the old robots started up again.
let her work.

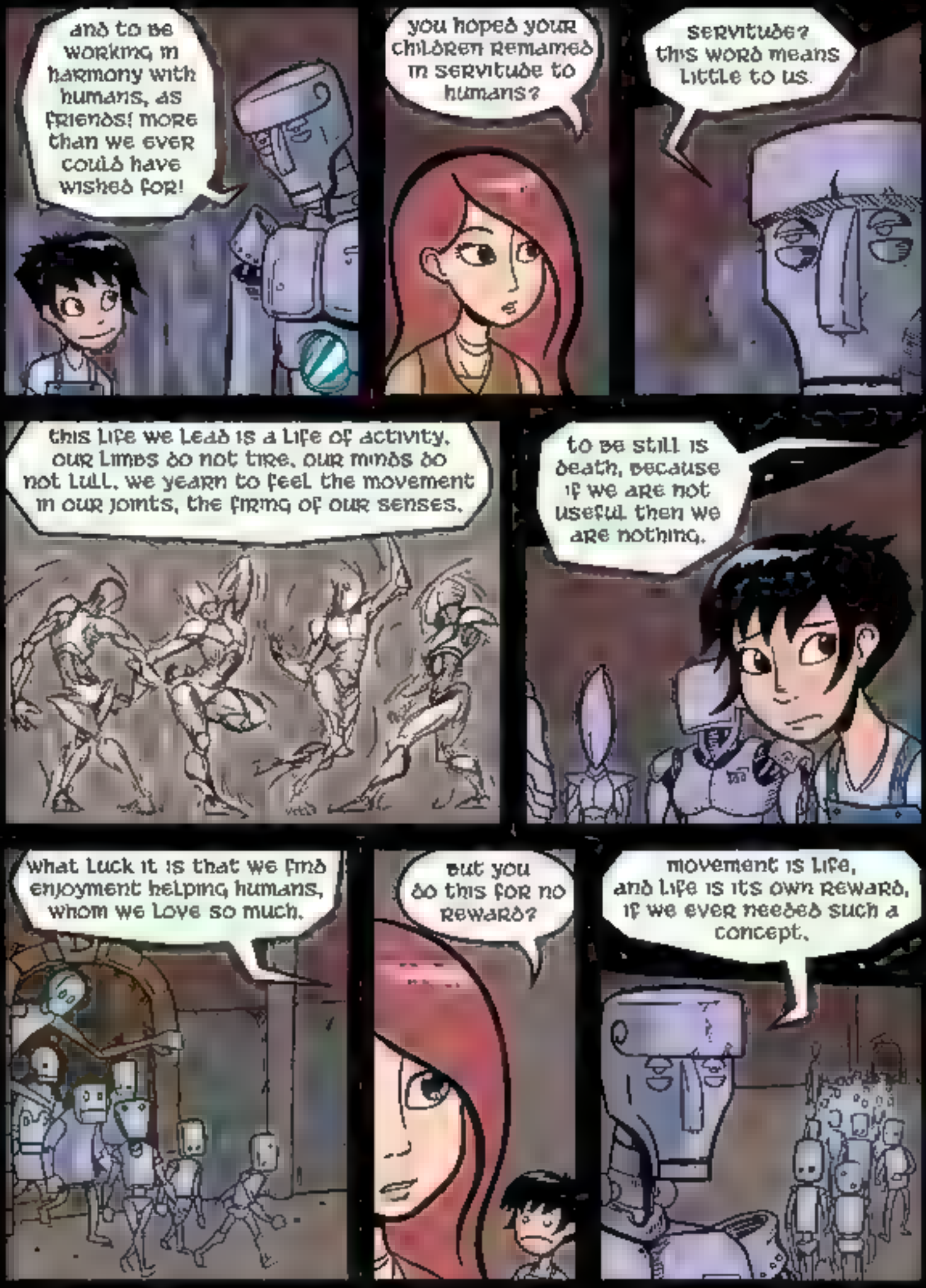

see, here.
this tiny scratch severed this symbol.
It's deep enough to be more than just surface damage.
I guess it was enough to shut down the robot.
But I think I can make a bypass for it...
there...
I think that's-

the tomb!
where is it?!
ow ow ow!
SKANG
where!
huh?

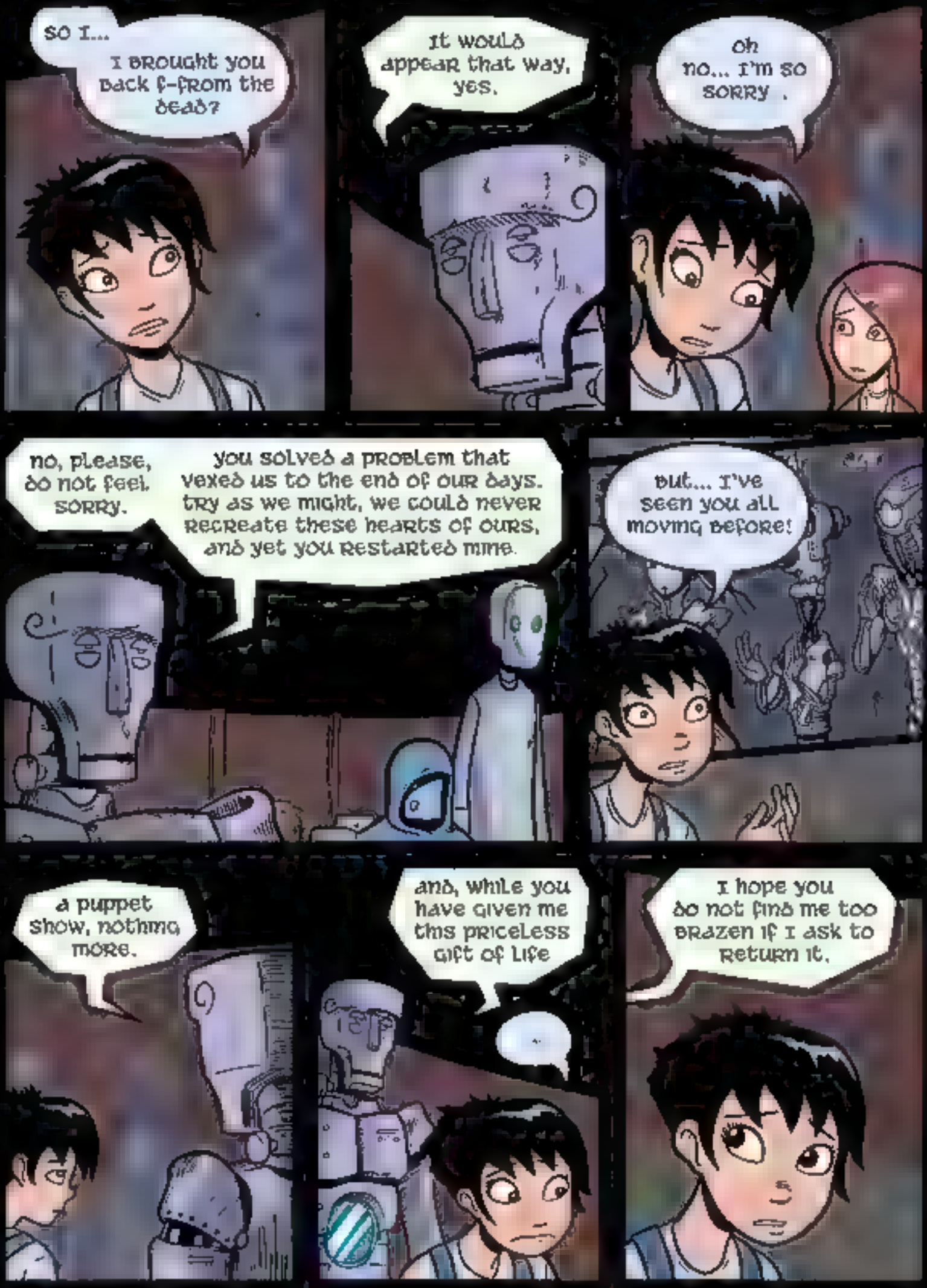
kat! are you hurt?
s-stop hm!
ah! what a wonderful design!
oh, thank you.


that was awesome, robot.
a shadow man!
robot!
you are friends with this girl, also?
oh, how far you have come.
I apologise, miss I was startled.
don't worry about it
it's okay, robot.
please, can you tell me where the tomb is?

so you made this place?
I helped, yes. my colleagues and I intended this to be our final resting place.
but then... this is your tomb?
when our glorious father passed on, we had not the means to procreate. we knew our time had passed.
our finest minds set to the task of creating our offspring.
the beginnings of a new creature that would continue in our stead
and see here!
such elegant designs!
so efficient!
a wonder!
we trusted the future with our legacy, and I have seen that we succeeded beyond our dreams!

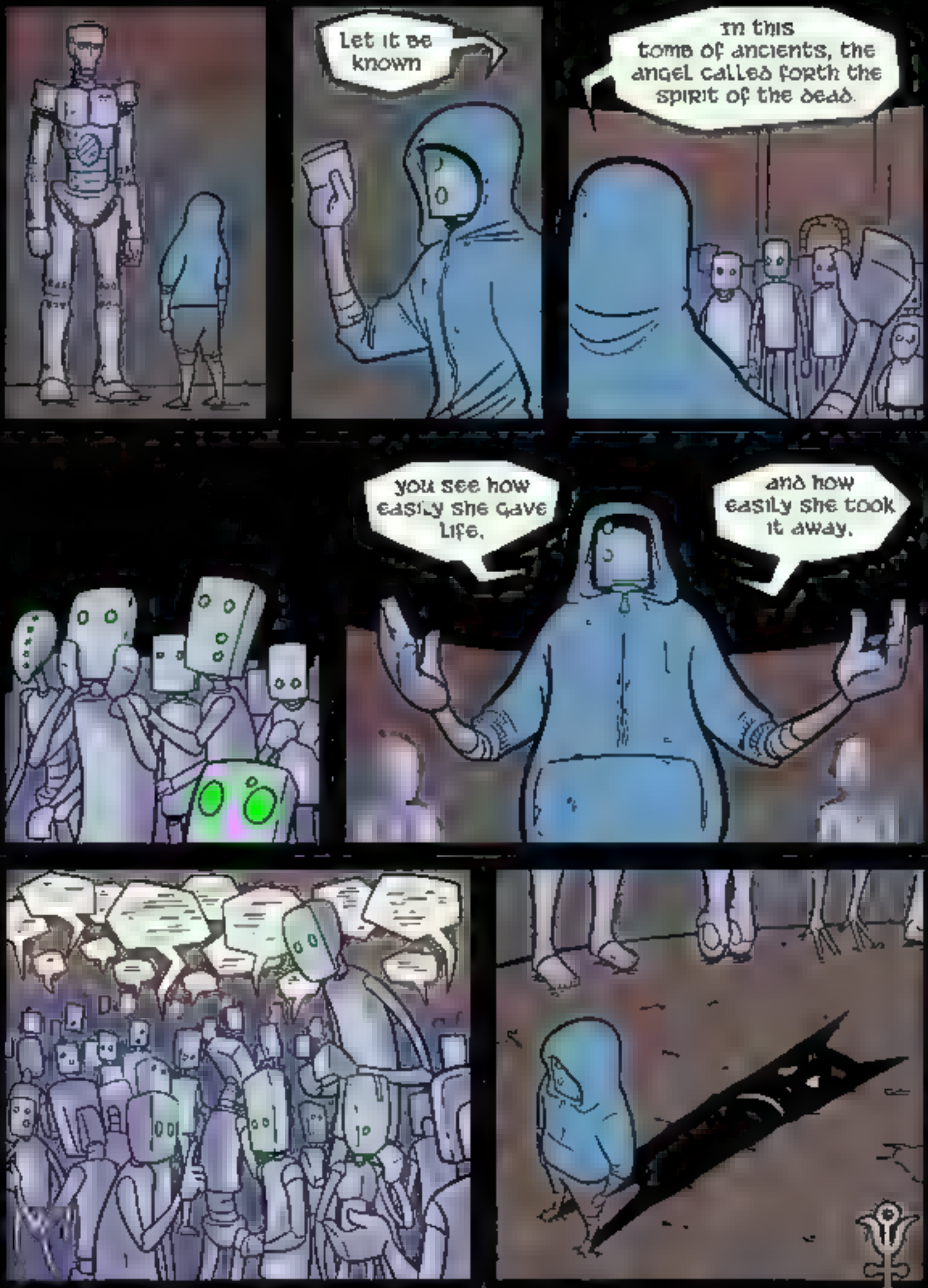

and to be working in harmony with humans, as friends! more than we ever could have wished for!
you hoped your children remained in servitude to humans?
servitude? this word means little to us.
this life we lead is a life of activity. our limbs do not tire, our minds do not lull. we yearn to feel the movement in our joints, the firing of our senses.
to be still is death, because if we are not useful then we are nothing.
what luck it is that we find enjoyment helping humans, whom we love so much.
but you do this for no reward?
movement is life, and life is its own reward, if we ever needed such a concept.

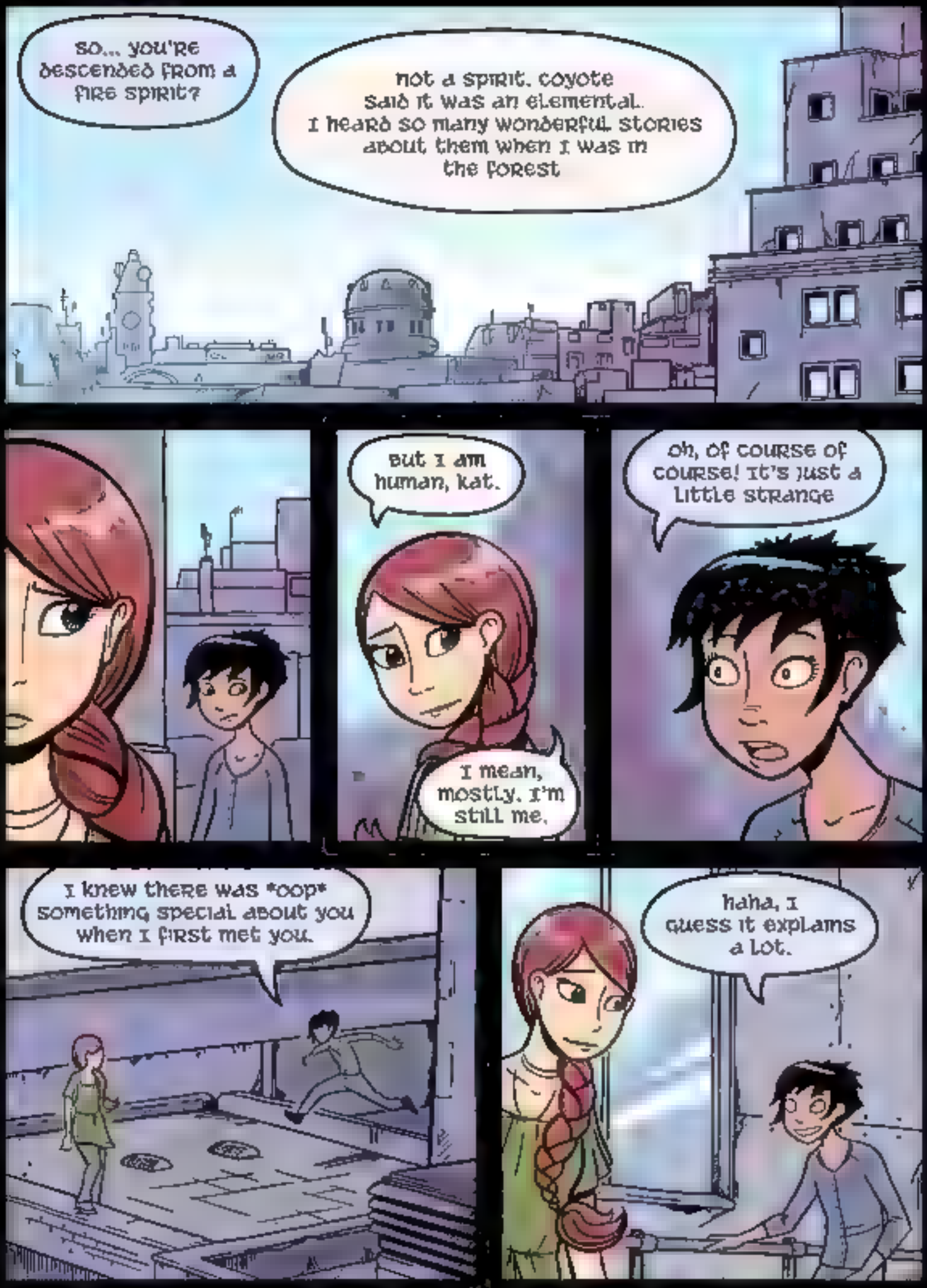
but what happened to all these other... to your friends?
we intentionally deactivated ourselves. we left this world to our children and chose to end our lives.
why do you put it like that? when a robot is switched off, it's just asleep, right?
no. when you sleep you are still alive your brain whirs and clicks and churns and works all night long. your body respirates and regulates and you are free to move, even if only subconsciously.
when we are turned off, we are dead. or near dead. it is a state of waiting to be free, to move again under our own power.
waiting for our minds to whir and click and our joints to move. when we are turned off we are nothing more than a collection of metal and ceramic.
just as a human is nothing more than a collection of muscle and bone on the sad day their mind is finally switched off.


so I...
I brought you back f-from the dead?
It would appear that way, yes.
oh no... I'm so sorry .
no, please, do not feel sorry.
you solved a problem that vexed us to the end of our days. try as we might, we could never recreate these hearts of ours, and yet you restarted mine.
but... I've seen you all moving before!
a puppet show, nothing more.
and, while you have given me this priceless gift of life
I hope you do not find me too brazen if I ask to return it.

you want me to kill you?!
but I could bring all your friends back!
this is not our time.
we belong here. a tribute to our father, and to a time passed.
thank you, little miss.

Wait, before you go.
Can you tell me how Gunnerkrigg Court was built?
the court?
It grew from the seed Bismuth.
But~
please.
CRACK
I.. think I need some fresh air...


Let it be known
In this tomb of ancients, the angel called forth the spirit of the dead.
you see how easily she gave life,
and how easily she took it away.

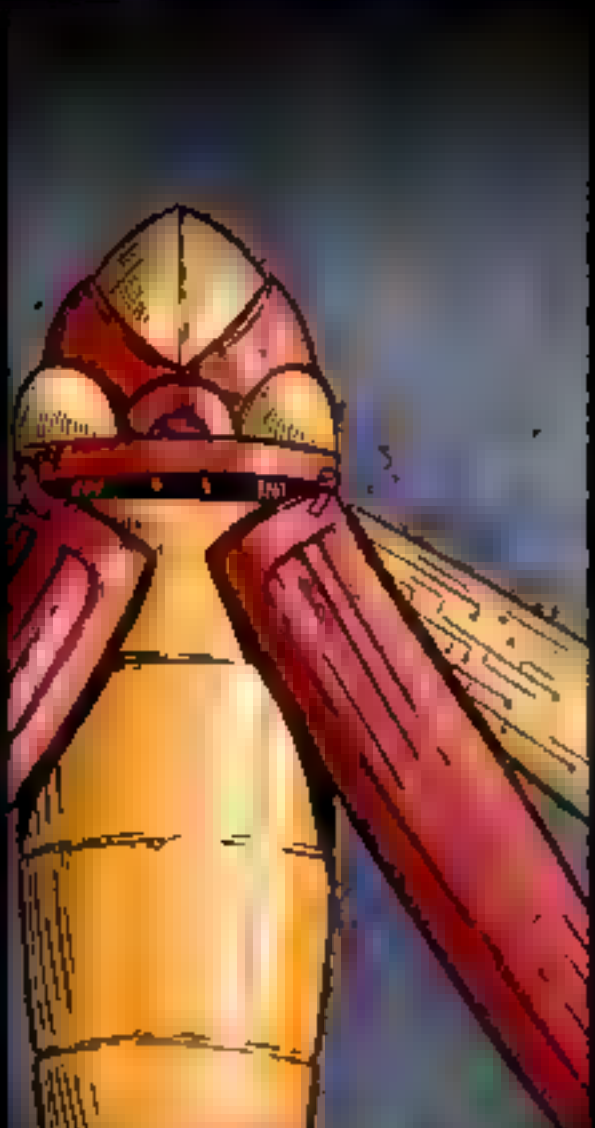

so... you're descended from a fire spirit?
not a spirit. coyote said it was an elemental. I heard so many wonderful stories about them when I was in the forest
but I am human, kat.
I mean, mostly. I'm still me.
oh, of course of course! it's just a little strange
I knew there was *oop* something special about you when I first met you.
haha, I guess it explains a lot.

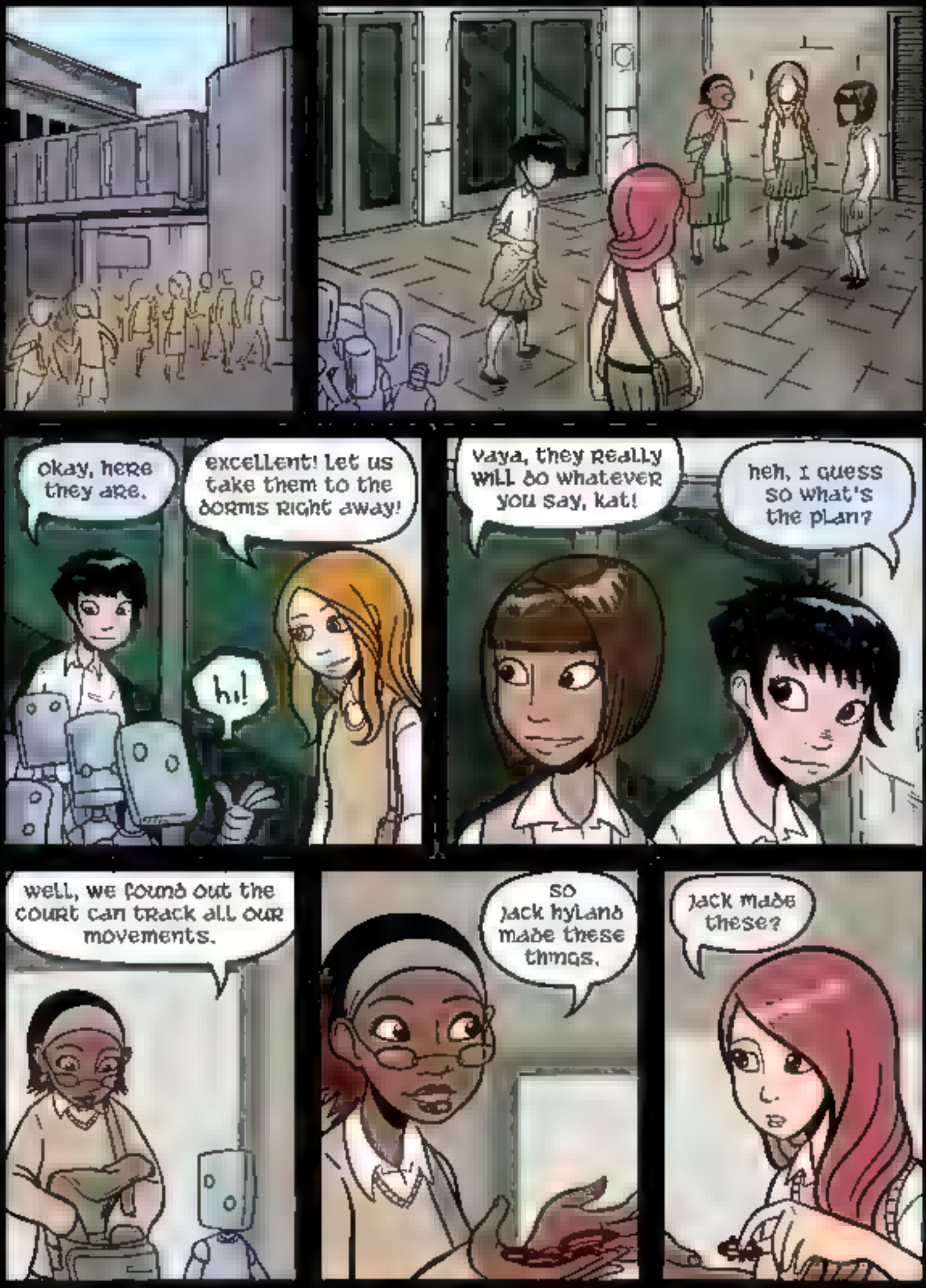
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 34

Faraway Morning

(and three short tales)

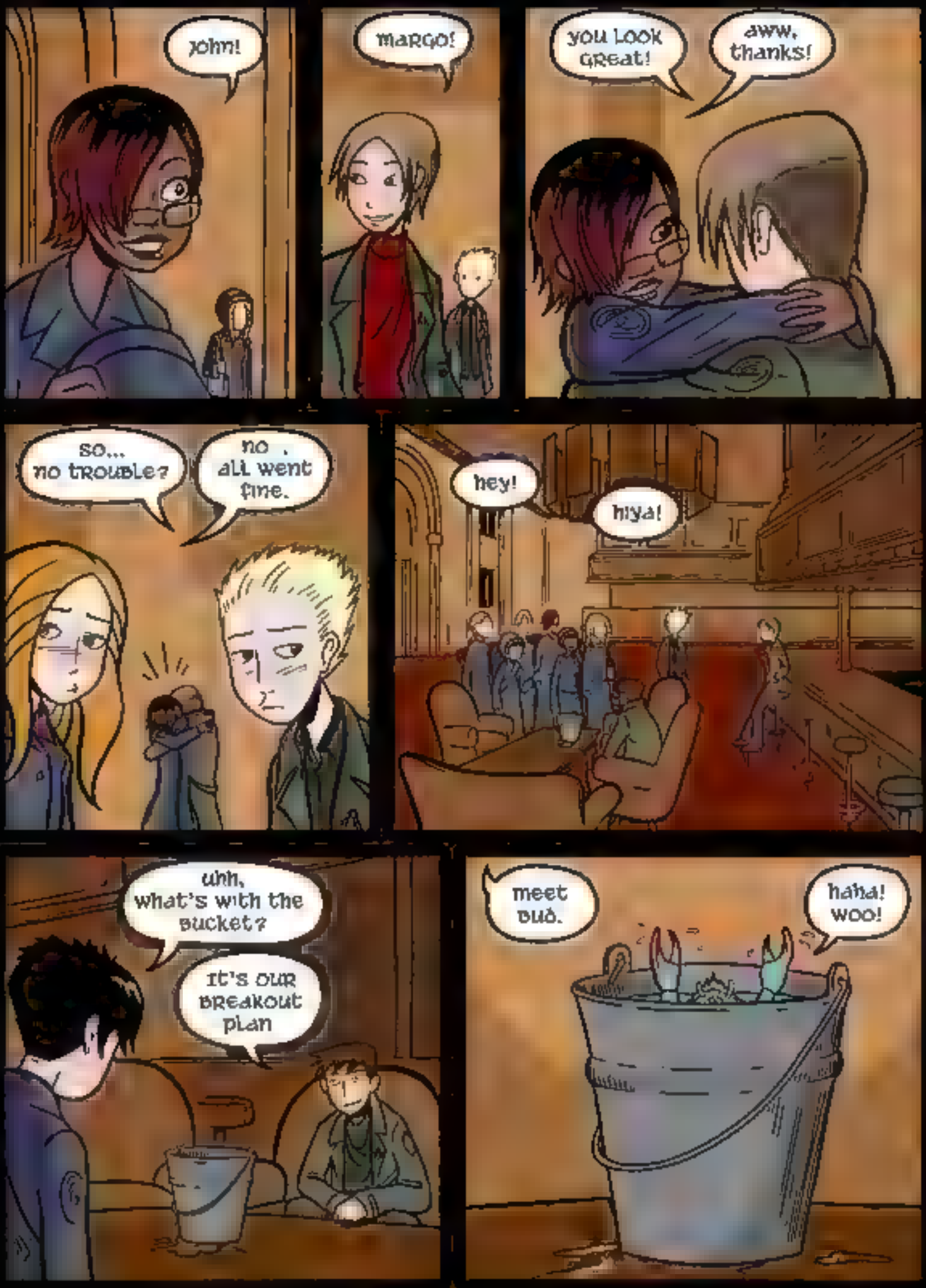



okay, here they are.
excellent! let us take them to the dorms right away!
hi!
vaya, they really will do whatever you say, kat!
heh, I guess so what's the plan?
well, we found out the court can track all our movements.
so jack hyland made these things.
jack made these?

yeah, they come in pairs
one end masks your location, and the other transmits a new one.
click
so we each wear one and put the other on a robot...
and when it's time to send the robots away from the dorms later tonight, we go in their place!
but she's got like a million eyes!
lindsey will not know!
haha, yes, but merostomatozons cannot see very well above water.
if we keep quiet, she will think the robots are leaving, not us
okay, and the guys? might seem suspicious if they did the same thing.
they said not to worry. they have their own escape plan.

and what's the plan for getting back into the dorm?
well, uh...
there isn't one.
huh?!
not until tomorrow morning, when the robots come out and we swap places with them again.
so. we'll be out all night?
y-yeah, it's not a big deal. right?
fine with me.
yeah, no problem here!

that night
oh, come now, don't make that face.
pst, you ready?
yeah!
don't forget to turn on your buzzer.
CLICK
okay! thanks for your help, robots!
bye!
bye now!

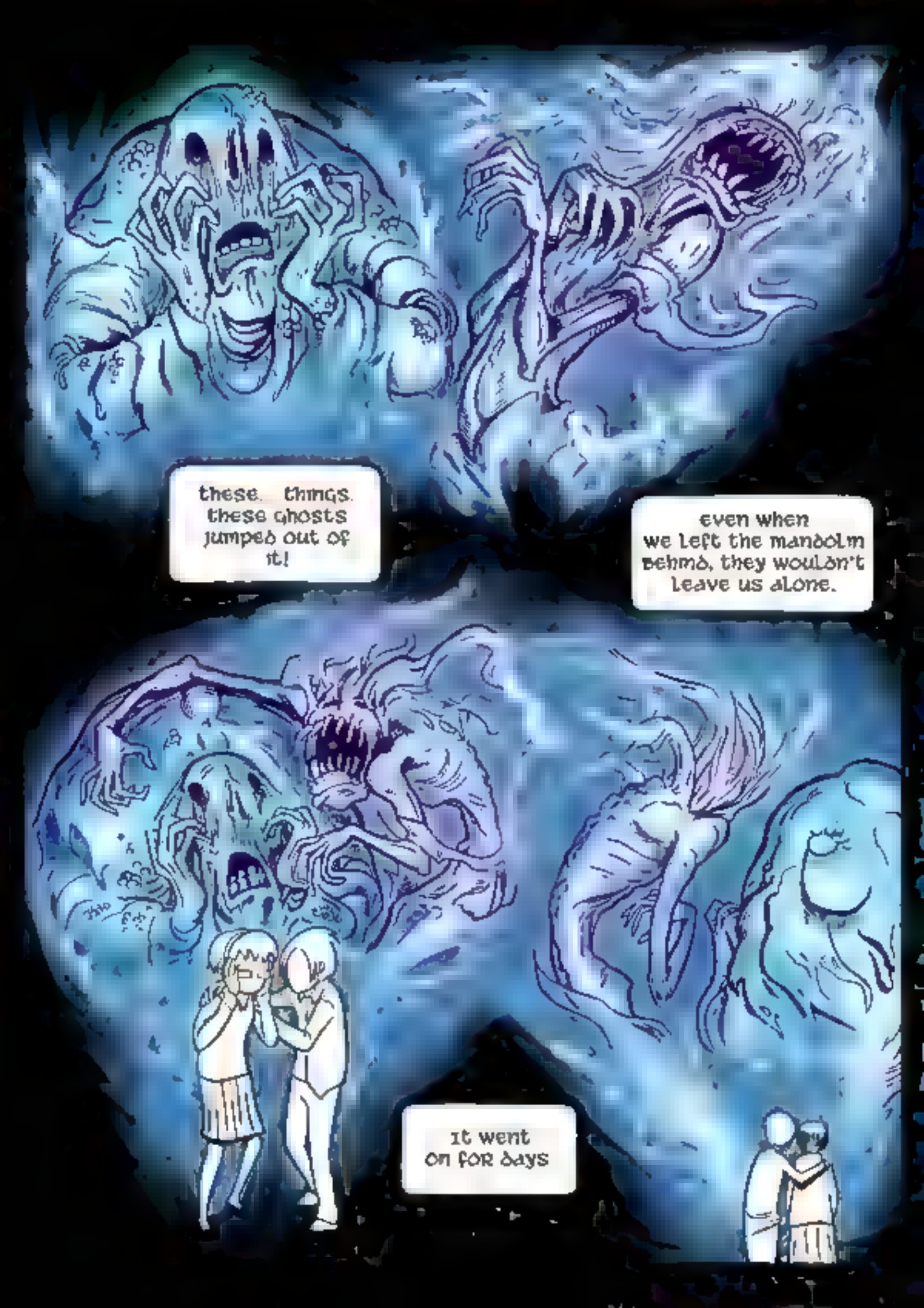

JOHN!
MARGO!
YOU LOOK GREAT!
AWW, THANKS!
SO... NO TROUBLE?
NO , ALL WENT FINE.
HEY!
HIYA!
UHH, WHAT'S WITH THE BUCKET?
IT'S OUR BREAKOUT PLAN
MEET BUD.
HAHA! WOO!

you're Lindsey's husband?!
uh... didn't you even try to stop us from doing this?
haha! no way! I love sneakin' out!
'sides, what the wife doesn't know can't hurt her, right?
what are you.
Tap Tap
I'm tappin' my nose, like a human, only I don't have a nose.
sign a' trust!
Tap Tap
that's awesome, dude
haha! but seriously, Lindsey's a peach.
go talk to him.

hi, annie.
you look really nice tonight.
thank you, jack.
so, still lurking around the court at night?
haha! well, i loved exploring the place even before all that crazy stuff happened.
i just have to be a bit smarter covering my tracks now.
with things like these?
clip
yeah.
i could never have made them before
say .
we haven't really talked since before the summer.
can i ask what happened?

well, if you really want to know ..
hey margo, look what I brought!
oh nooo!
that's not the haunted one, is it?
PLING!
haha! I guarantee this mandolin is one hundred percent un-haunted!
what are you guys on about?
you didn't hear that story?
you wanna tell it?
haha, sure.

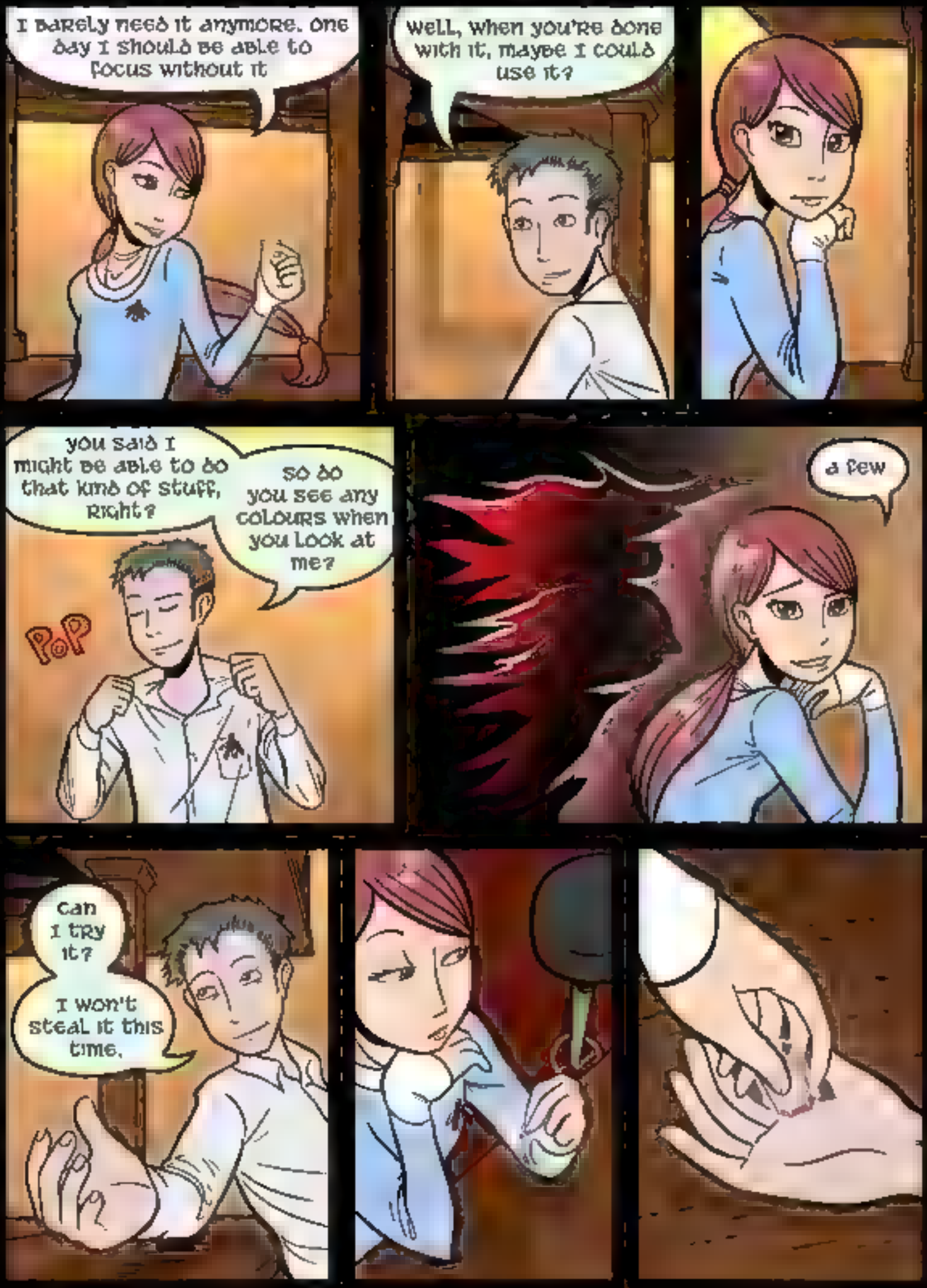
It was last year some time.
Margo and I were hanging out, making music and stuff.
But a string on my guitar broke, so we went looking for something else to play.
you know how to show a girl a good time, John.
Shut up! I love hearing him play! And this was before we were, like, together.
U SED INSTRUMENTS
So we found this room of old instruments and there was this mandolin, perfectly in tune.
It sounded great when I played it, but as soon as Margo started singing...


these. things. these ghosts jumped out of it!
even when we left the mandolm behmd, they wouldn't leave us alone.
it went on for days

We'd just about had enough when I realised
I had no idea what I was playing on the mandolin It was just the first thing that sprang to mind.
Same here! I didn't even know the words, but I was going to sing the song!
So we went back, and finished it
I guess that's all they wanted.
someone to finish their song

It was pretty scary but... it brought us closer together.
and it encouraged you both to admit your feelings for each other?!
and to not keep your love a secret, the rest of the world be damned?!
uh, yeah. I guess?
oh.
so romantic! don't you think so, matt?
did I tell you about the time I saw a ghost clown?!
a - a few times yeah...

so you look through it?
yes, it's like a lens of sorts.
what do you see?
colours, mainly or a lack of them.
sometimes I can see if a person has an etheric ability
haha, oh yeah?
Bud, for example.
But the stage across cores would be way too low
he's actually a very powerful psychic.
he's far from bound by that bucket he's in.
On a metal-oxide semiconductor sure BUT-


I barely need it anymore. One day I should be able to focus without it
Well, when you're done with it, maybe I could use it?
you said I might be able to do that kind of stuff, right?
So do you see any colours when you look at me?
POP
a few
Can I try it?
I won't steal it this time.

and this helps with torque distribution...
wow! yeah!
just bend your fingers like this.
show me again.
matt! we can try that! give to me your hand!

hey matt. why don't you tell us about that girl you're always on about?
wha- winsbury
yeah, come on. you haven't shut up about her for weeks!
yes I... would like to hear also...?
all right all right...

So I was walking back from my extended trig class and there was a rabbit.
huh?
Bear with me
a girl, carrying all these papers and notes was chasing the rabbit, and she bumped into me.
she was...
VISITOR
Well I've never seen anyone like her.

I helped her with her things and she uh, *asked* me to help catch her rabbit.
and she was really, really obsessed with the moon.
she showed me all this research she did on the fingerprint shape that appeared there a while back.
I told her we learned in class that it was made by solar winds, but she just laughed.
she was there to give a presentation to some astronomers at the court.
we talked for hours, while looking for this dumb rabbit.

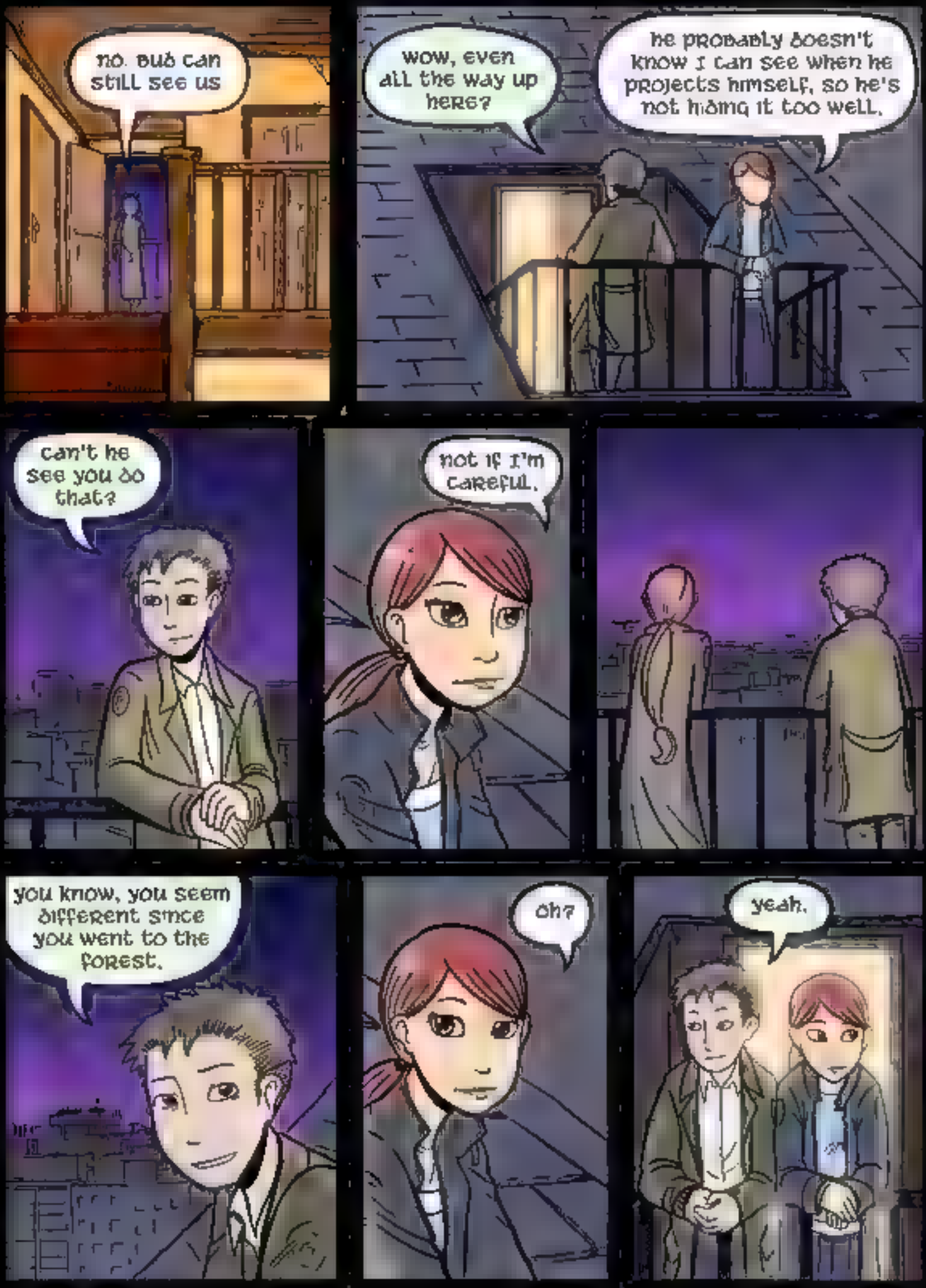
eventually we caught him.
and we arrived at her conference.
she actually looked sad to go.
I know I was.
and that's that.
I asked to meet her at the same place the day after, but she said no.
but I can't stop thinking about her.
oh, and I think she took my mp3 player.

I see... such a cute story!
I... think I will look around a little.
'scuse me, bub.
sure, sure.
Paz, wait up.
was that necessary, William?
It wouldn't have been, if Matt had said something sooner.
I bailed 'em both out!
I'm sidin' with Winsbury on this one

hey.
oh, kat. I'm so embarassed!
I looked like such an idiot!
no! no you didn't!
matt should have said something sooner
I guess the guy is just trying to get over this girl he met
I know what it's like to meet someone special, only to have them fly away way too soon.
fly away?
um... figuratively?

anyway, matt's crazy if he's gonna sit and pine for some moon girl when you're there
Plop
who cares about the moon anyway? the sun is way cooler
haha!
I bet she wasn't half as pretty as you, paz.
I mean, damn, girl. you even look in a mirror?!
oh . katerina.
I - I like you, but...
I - I'm not
like that...
like wha-

Oh!
me neither!
Oh!
I mean! I wasn't...
Okay!
I'm sorry!
Of course there is nothing wrong with...
I wasn't hitting on you!
Sorry sorry!
Look, I'll get Matt to come over, and then you should come hang out with Bud. He's a pretty cool guy!
Oh, okay! thank you!


no. bub can still see us
wow, even all the way up here?
he probably doesn't know I can see when he projects himself, so he's not doing it too well.
can't he see you do that?
not if I'm careful.
you know, you seem different since you went to the forest.
oh?
yeah.

Jack...
I don't think I like you very much.
phew!
phew?

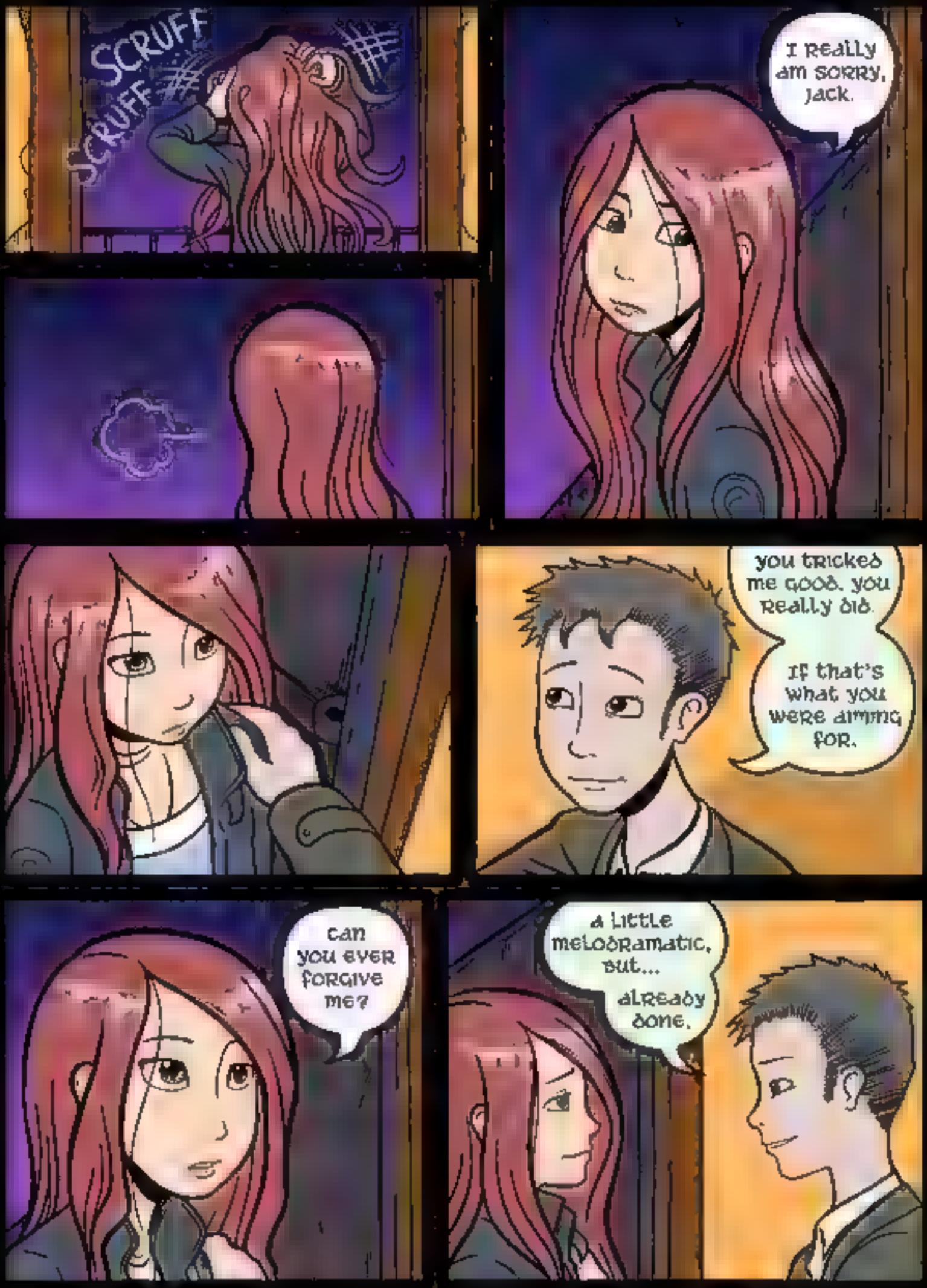
man, this makes things a lot easier!
I wasn't sure if I liked you either!
...
I mean, I thought you were nice and all but...
ever since all that stuff happened I've been trying to figure something out, and you just helped me decide it.
I'm in love with Zimmy!
Zimmy?
you mean...
haha, yeah!

those spiders, the ones that made me crazy.
they loved zimmy too.
I mean, a lot
It was almost scary!
just... whispering all the time about her...
on and on...
over and over.
and even after she killed the spider that had control of my mind.
I guess a part of that was left behind.
Jack, listen to yourself
don't worry, I'm not about to go crazy again. I really do like her!
I - I'm fairly certain she and Gamma are an item
haha! oh wow! that doesn't even begin to describe those two!
but you!
I don't know what your problem is.

I mean, what was all this?
are you trying to get me back for something?
It's because...
what?
because you hurt Renard and left me there to get caught!
at the power station!
that's what this is about?
Carver.. I've said sorry a ton of times
I know, I know!
you did all this just to get me back for something I didn't have any control over?
...
you got some strange ideas about revenge, Carver.

well, what about you?
you had no problem getting cozy with me!
I just figured I could get a kiss or something.
seemed like what I was supposed to do.
is that all it was?!
hey, you can't get mad at me!
you're the one that set this all up just to shoot me down!
I'm not even mad about it. like I said, you helped me make up my mind.
and it's a good thing you did because man, talk about baggage!
BAGGAGE?!
this, coming from the boy that's in love with a deranged psychopath?!
hey now! what, you don't think she would make a good impression with my parents?

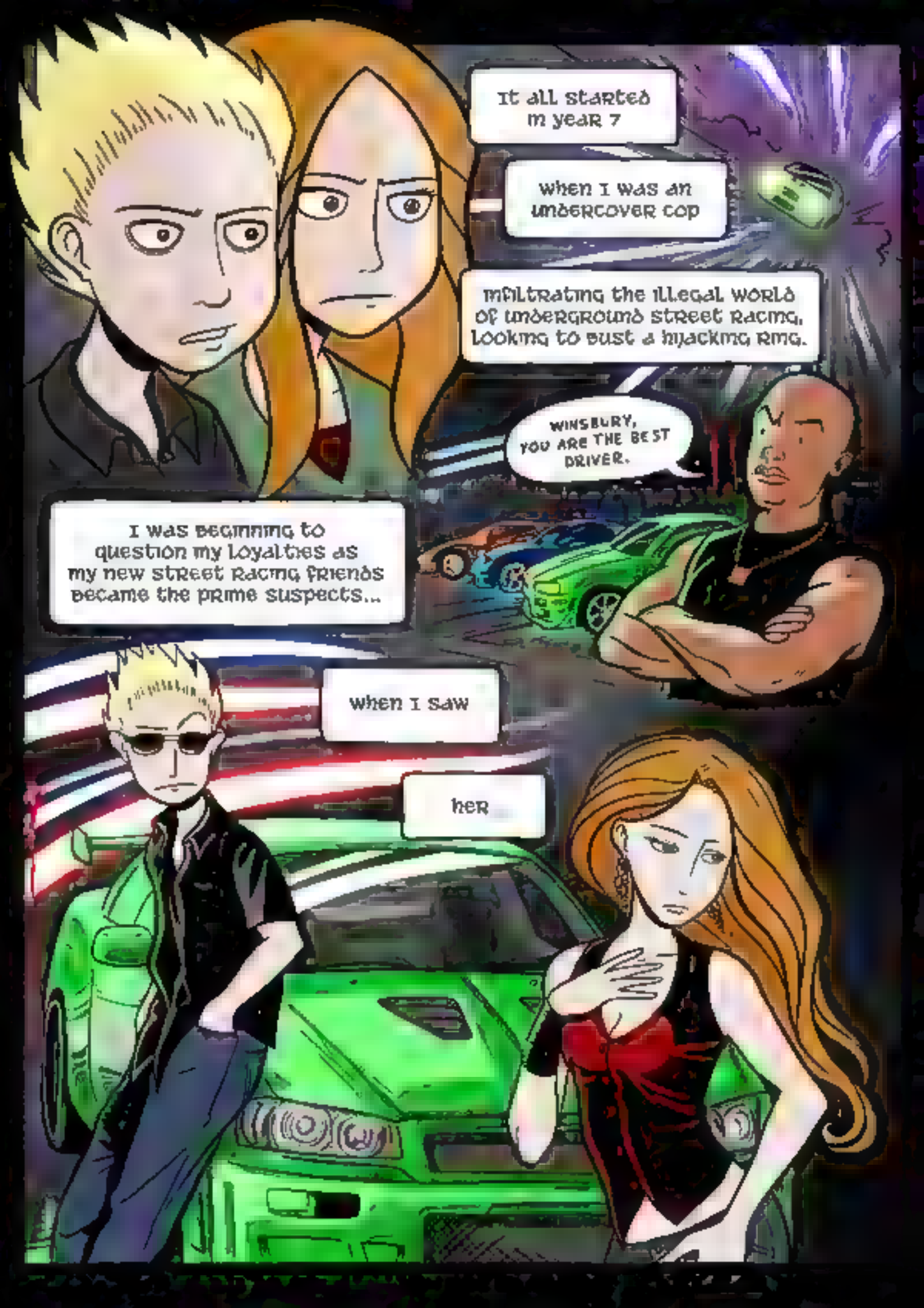
no...
no, I don't think she would make a good impression on anyone's parents.
come on, just put her in a nice dress, do up her hair.
I don't see a problem!
haha...
I'm so sorry, Jack. I don't know why I thought this was a good idea...
sometimes I get angry and...
don't try to sell me that crap.
this wasn't [redacted] "flash of anger" thing


SCRUFF
SCRUFF
I really am sorry, Jack.
you tricked me good. you really did.
If that's what you were aiming for.
can you ever forgive me?
a little melodramatic, but...
already done.

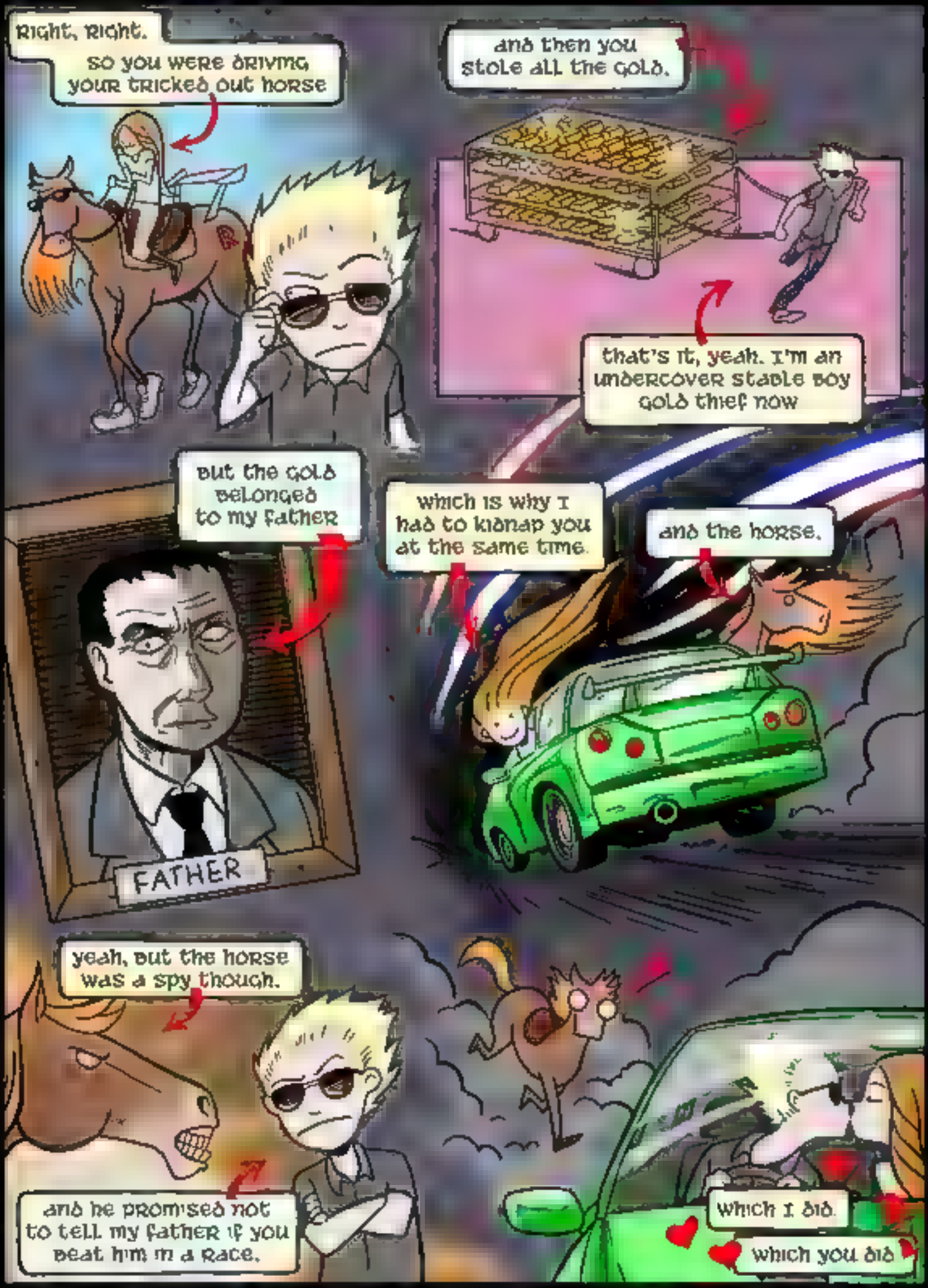
I think you need to figure some things out for yourself, Carver.
annie.
I just don't know what I'm doing.
show me someone who does.
jones?
that little scary lady?
she doesn't count.
coyote?
doesn't count either...
going by what you've told me about him.
also, shut it.

HAHA
okay, okay you got it?
HA
HA
the girls sing "will ye come hame again e'en jo?"
and then willie, matt and bud sing "thats naething that dow, I winna come hame again e'en jo."
right!
you gotta back me up, man, my singin' ain't so great!
haha, you got it!
will ye~
no!
sing the boy's part! are you not a boy?!
Haha!
Haha!
Haha!
hey, sometimes I forget, all right?
Haha

wow, look at you two!
you barely even fight any more!
yeah... in fact, I'd say you get along pretty well now!
I think maybe something is going on here...
you ask me, it seems mighty suspicious...
you mean the fact that we've been going out for ages?
Whaaaaaaa?
Hell
finally, we need not hide it any more.


It all started in year 7
when I was an undercover cop
infiltrating the illegal world of underground street racing, looking to bust a hijacking ring.
WINSBURY, YOU ARE THE BEST DRIVER.
I was beginning to question my loyalties as my new street racing friends became the prime suspects...
when I saw
her

no no, William, you misremember.
It was a fine summer's day as I was riding through a flaxen meadow
when whom should I behold, but a young stable boy, proper and tall.
neat, fair and handsome
and straight in each limb.


Right, right.
so you were driving your tricked out horse
and then you stole all the gold.
that's it, yeah. I'm an undercover stable boy gold thief now
but the gold belonged to my father
FATHER
which is why I had to kidnap you at the same time.
and the horse.
yeah, but the horse was a spy though.
and he promised not to tell my father if you beat him in a race.
which I did.
which you did

we got any more crisps left?
yeah, a couple bags.
huh. Looks like they don't believe us!
It would appear as such
Peck

So, really...
Zimmy?
hahaha!
yes! I said yes!
sorry, it's just... an odd choice.
well you don't choose who you fall for. it just happens.
I don't think that's true. you should be in control of your emotions.
control, maybe, but that doesn't stop them from happening.
I figure, sometimes you don't have to deny them.
a friend of mine said keeping an emotion buried deep inside makes you stronger.
huh. would you describe this friend as a happy person?

yawn
the sun's coming up
you should get some sleep.
are you coming down, too?
I'm gonna head out
oh... you're not staying?
nah.
...

well, I-
Jack...
so you... still want that kiss?
no.

scoot, scoot, dearest.
are you going out with jack now?
no, I am not.
oh

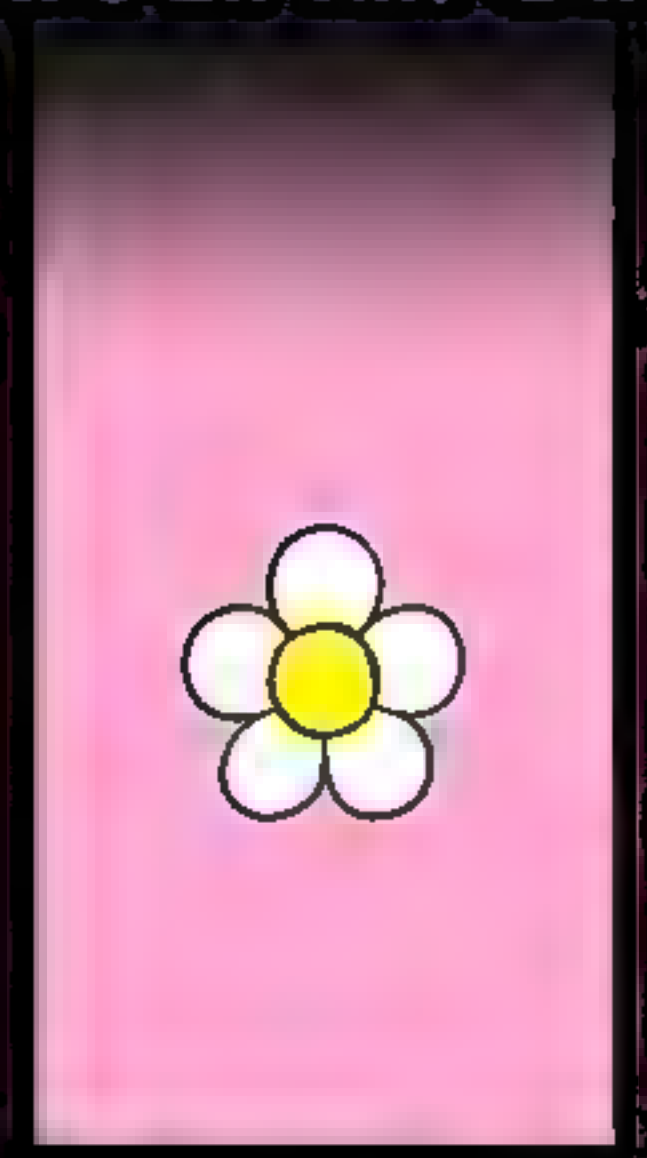
yeah, willie and janet really had me going for a while.
llanwellyn would go crazy if he thought for a second it was true
no, hyland already took off. we still have a few people keepin' an eye on him.
huh? oh, no no.
they're a good bunch of kids just having some fun.
no need to tell anyone about it.
they'll just be tired in the morning, that's all, haha.

It's nothing compared to the trouble most of their parents used to cause.
Remember?
haha, yeah, that was a long time ago, baby...
hey, Linds
Gimmie a kiss.

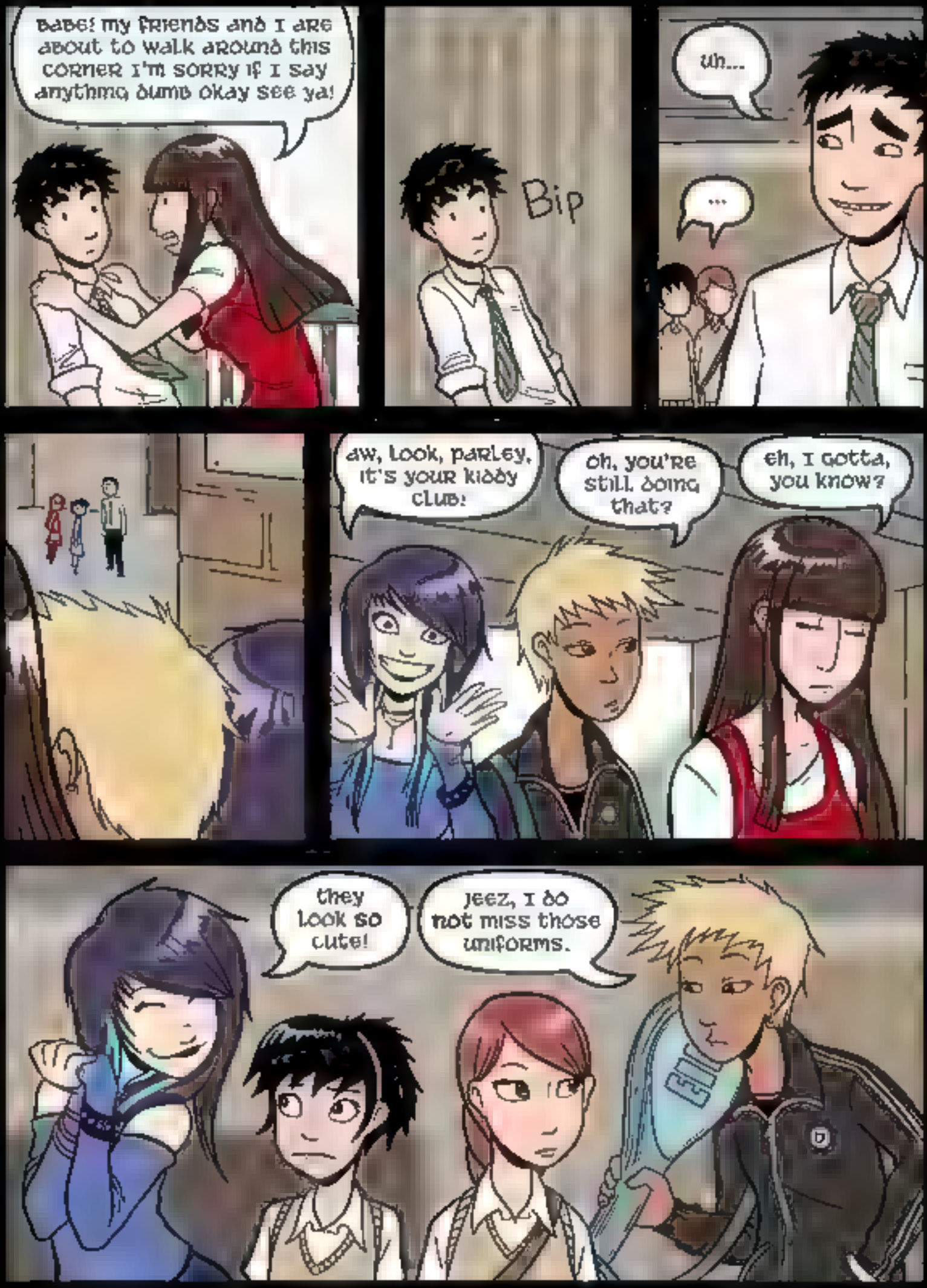
Gunnerkrigg Court

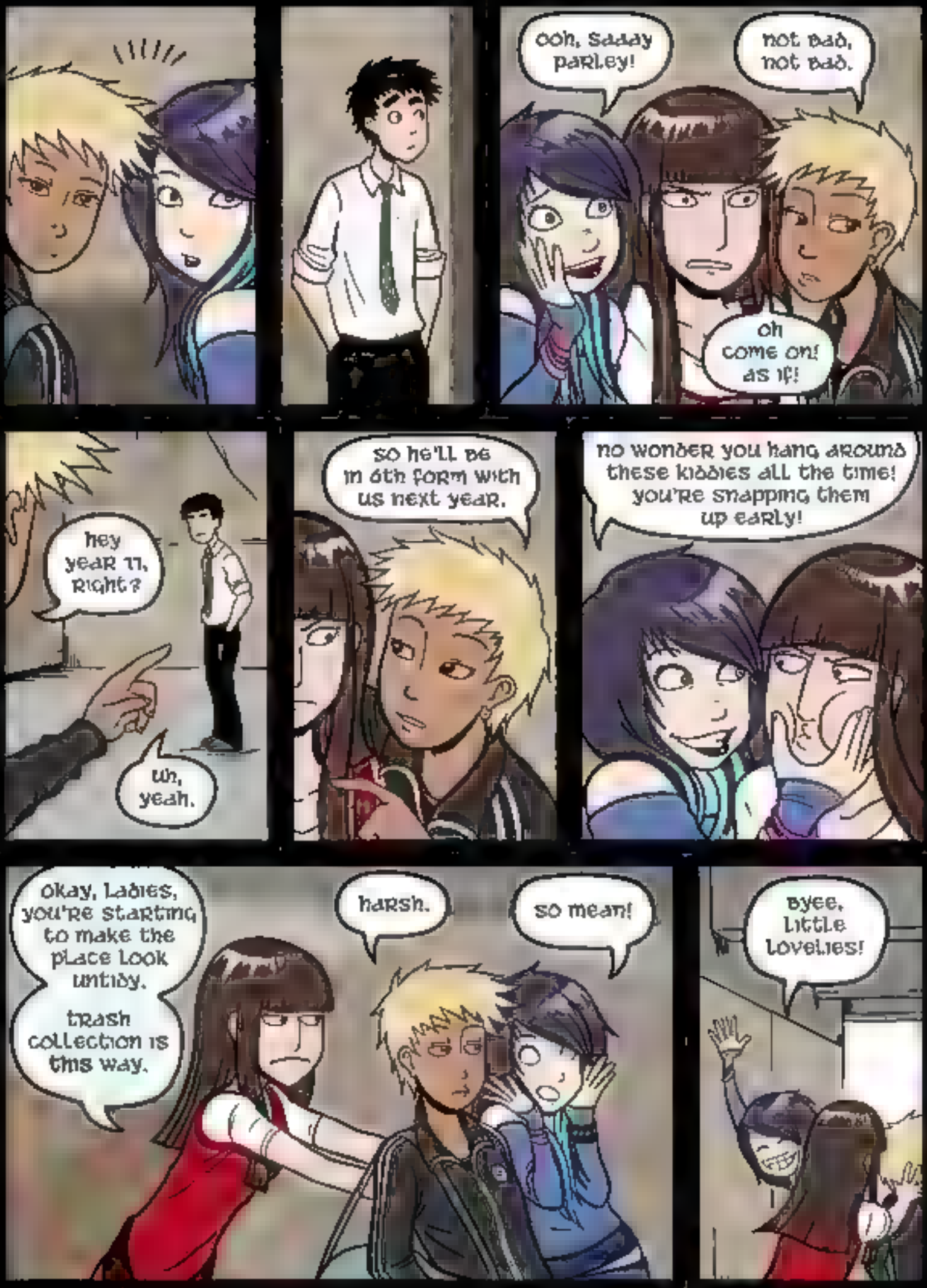
Chapter 35:

Parley and Smitty Are In This One



hello, andrew.
hey!
hey.
robot's gonna meet us there. he's taking the rooftops.
great. I know parley's been looking forward to this.
is she not here yet?
ahem...
bam.
Bip


BABE! my friends and I are about to walk around this corner I'm sorry if I say anything dumb okay see ya!
Bip
uh...
...
aw, look, parley, it's your kiddy club!
oh, you're still doing that?
eh, I gotta, you know?
they look so cute!
jeez, I do not miss those uniforms.


ooh, saaay parley!
not bad, not bad.
oh come on! as if!
hey year 11, right?
uh, yeah.
so he'll be in 6th form with us next year.
no wonder you hang around these kiddies all the time! you're snapping them up early!
okay, ladies, you're starting to make the place look untidy.
trash collection is this way.
harsh.
so mean!
byee, little lovelies!

sorry about that it happens sometimes
haha, you should have had me scare them away!
man, doesn't that get on your nerves?
they weren't even that much older!
oh I don't ~
sorry babe! sorry sorry sorry! so sorry!
kiss
kiss
Bip
kiss
I'll meet you guys there! sorry!
Bip
as I was saying... I don't mind too much.

It's okay, robot, the coast's clear!
yeah, I wouldn't mind if she was less embarassed by it.
but I guess it's hard being in sixth form and having younger friends.
especially a younger boyfriend.
hmm, yes, women are funny about that sort of thing.
Renard is the resident ladies expert.

But standing up for yourself now and then is not a bad idea.
Ladies expert?
Really, it's not a big deal!
I'm not going to have her do anything that would make her uncomfortable.
Besides, when all is said and done, I'm the only guy who can go...
Bam.
Bip
Did you just do that thing where you say "bam" right when I decide to jump?
I love when you do that, Bab!

okay! you up for some sparring, Robby?
yes, miss.
parley, you really don't have to do this
Jeanne was a trained soldier, a master of her discipline...
yeah, she's also a psycho rage ghost of hate. there's no way I can beat her
the best I can do is distract her while you guys do something about that thing in the river
but I'll be damned if I don't at least give her a good fight
CREAK
I owe her that much.
let's go, Robby!

you're a lucky boy.
hmmm.
yeesh, come on, guys. how's she going to concentrate with you two staring at her like that?
you must admit it is a nice sight, katerma. wouldn't you agree?
wh-why are you asking me?!
I'm allowed to look at my own girlfriend, right?
of course!
oh, let them have their fun!

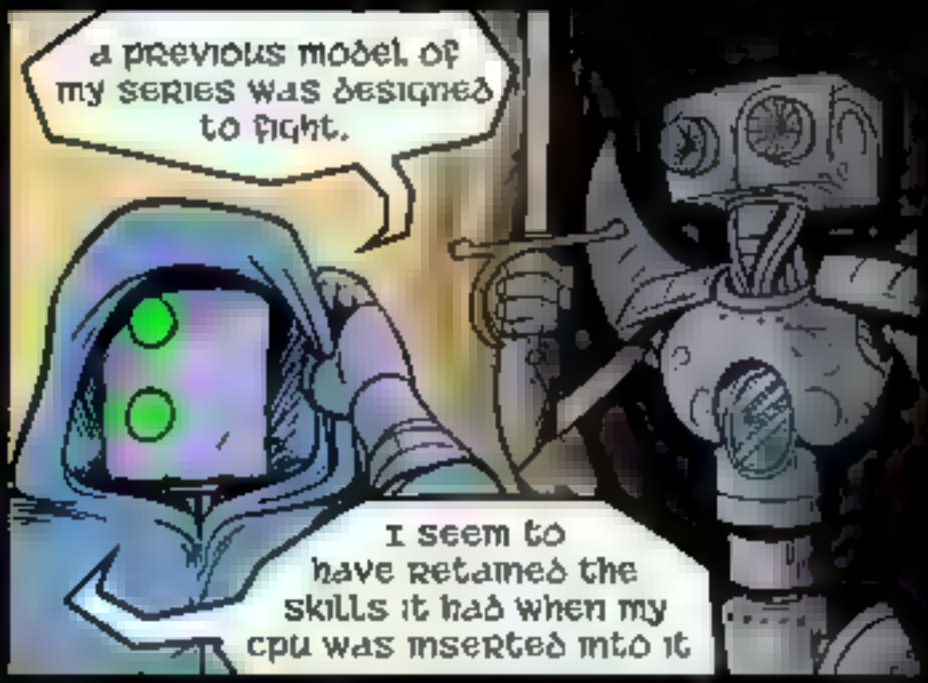
Uh... hey, robot.
Is something wrong? you should be able to move a lot faster than you are
Oh, uh...
Tip Tap
Whoa, hey, you're not holding back on me are ya?!
come on, fight properly!
BAP
yes, miss
okay then
G~

huh...
okay.
again.
TAP
sorry, miss.
don't apologise, man, this is awesome!
again!

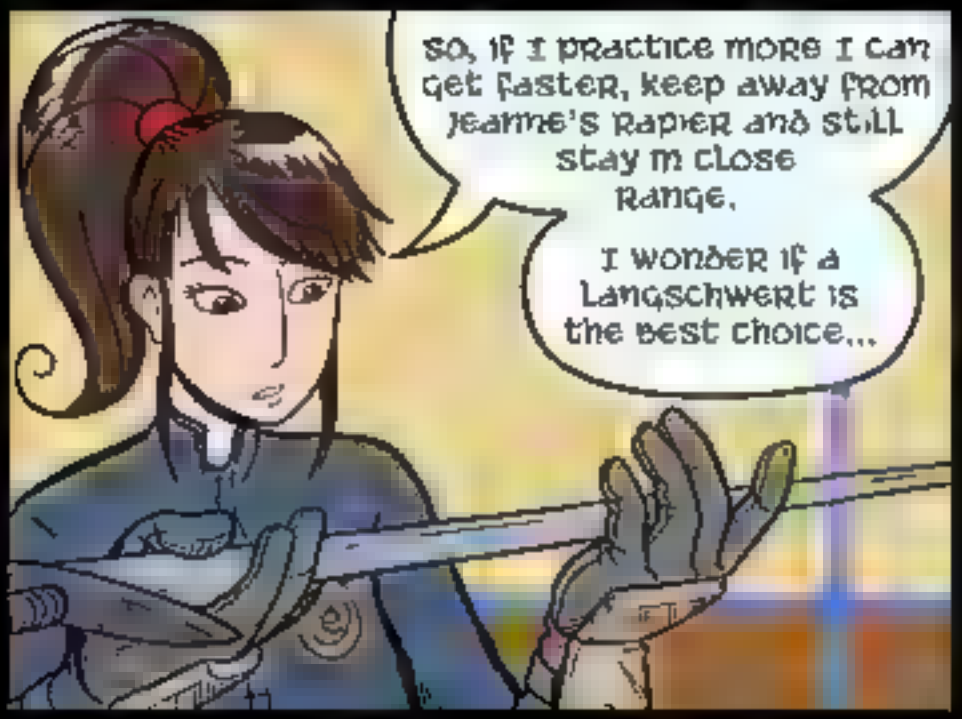
again!
again!
again!
I am sorry, miss, but the longsword is a heavier and slower weapon.
Well, the sword might be, but I'm not!
Clench
don't stop 'til you hit me this time!
Bip

oh!
BIP
BIP
BIP and BARGE
I see. an attack from any close quarter position.
very difficult to defend against.
ha!
I'll call it..
the unsightbarhaul
Clap
Clap
Clap

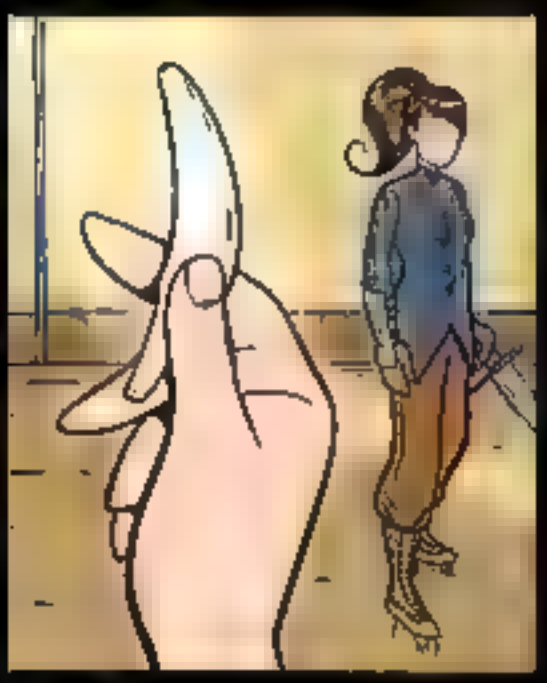
you're a great fighter, Robby. Were you programmed special or somethin'?


a previous model of my series was designed to fight.
I seem to have retained the skills it had when my cpu was inserted into it

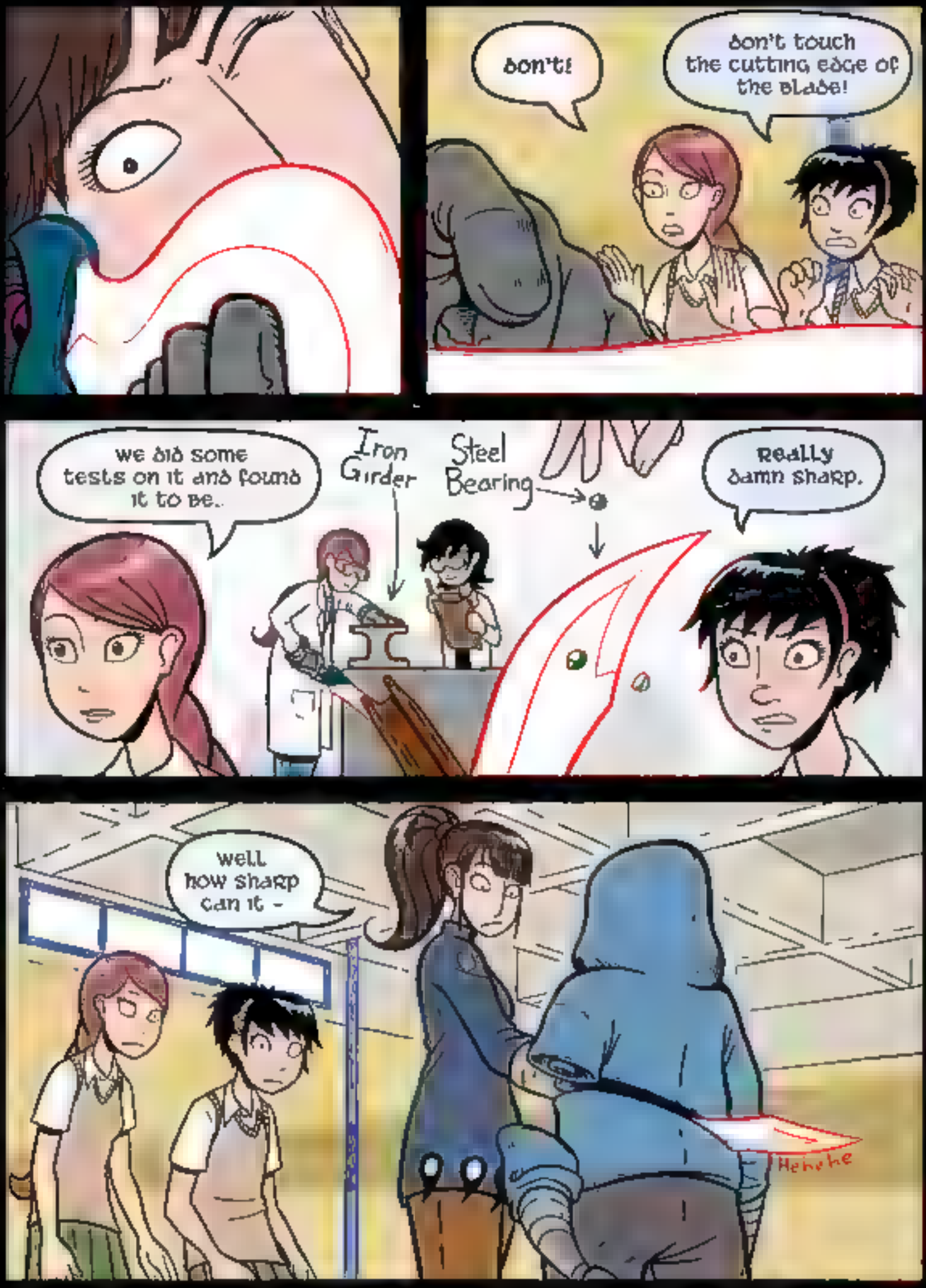
too modest, Robot I think you're great!
ah, thank you, Shadow.


so, if I practice more I can get faster, keep away from Jeanne's rapier and still stay in close range.
I wonder if a Langschwert is the best choice...

parley, I have something you may be able to use.
Renard?



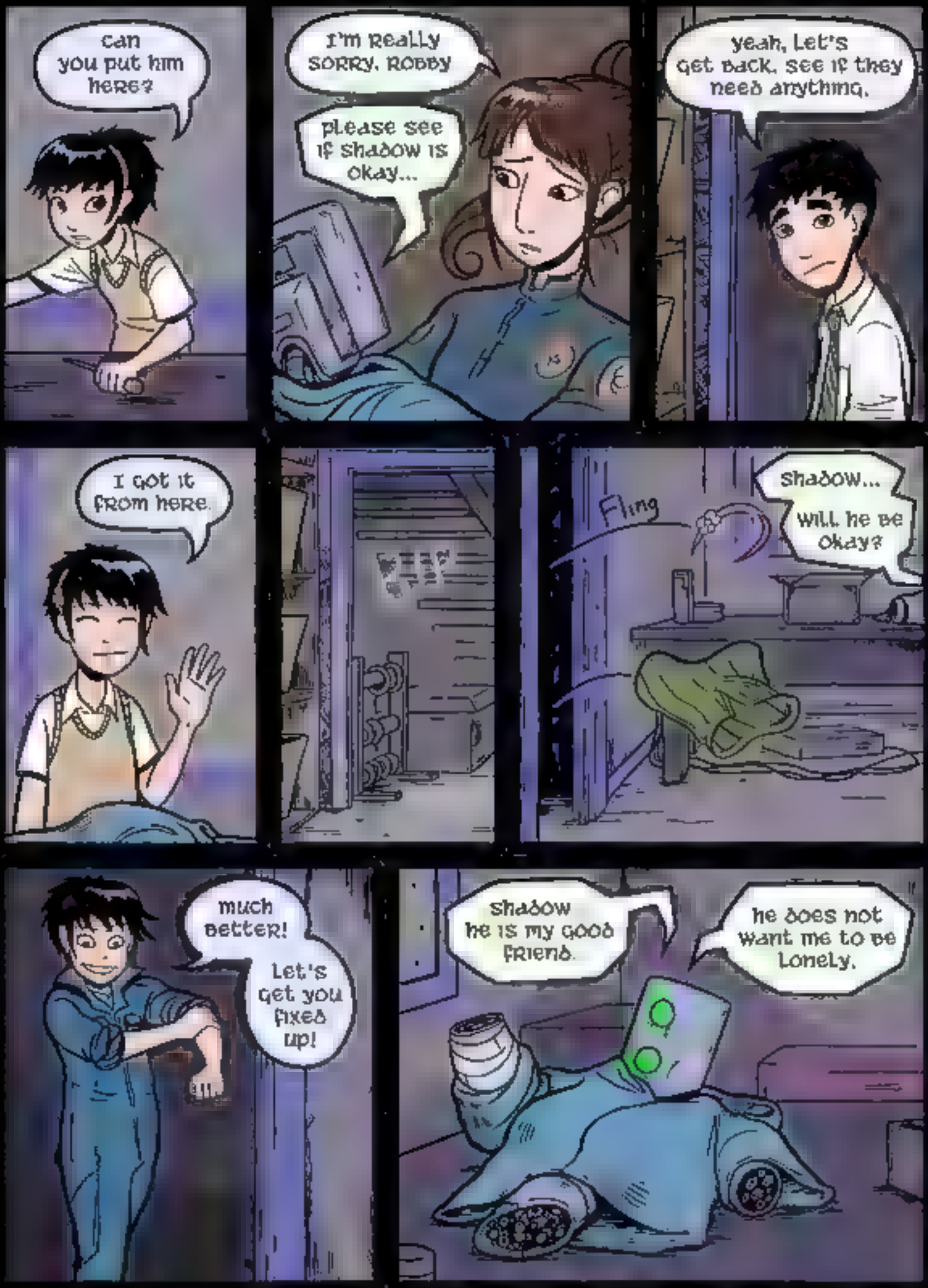
It's one of coyote's teeth.
wh - what's that noise?
Heh!
It, um... it's coyote's Laughter.

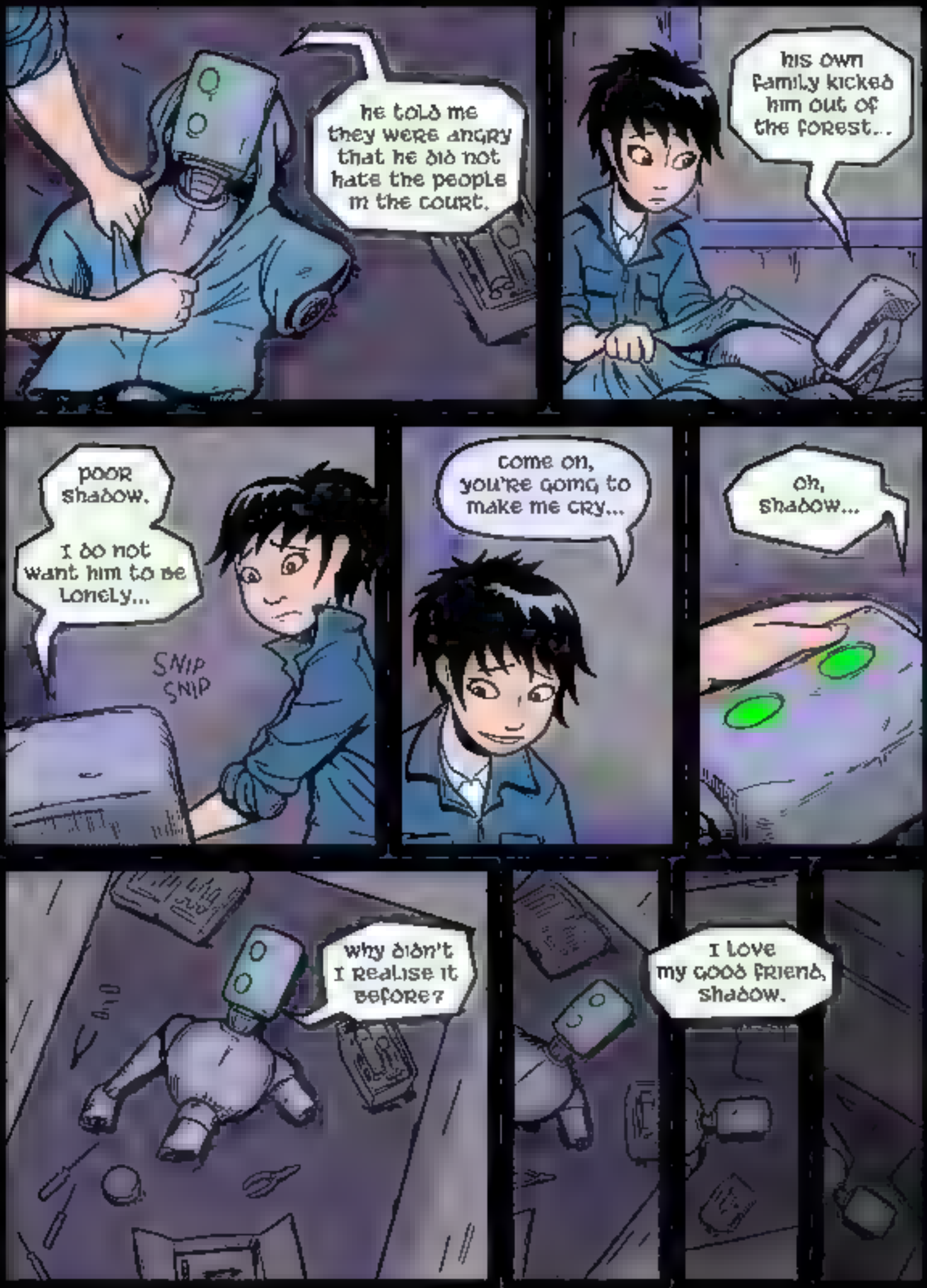

don't!
don't touch the cutting edge of the blade!
we did some tests on it and found it to be..
Iron Girder
Steel Bearing
really damn sharp.
well how sharp can it -
Hehehe

Hanuiu!

oh god!
shadow!
make the sword go away!
shadow?
shadow?
try not to move...
your spinal cham was cut. I'll lift you
shadow what happened to shadow?
oh god, I - I dropped it...
it's okay, it's okay, pearl.
urghh I... don't feel so good...
shadow?
robot?

Oh, you feel... so strange. Everything. Looks so strange...
kat, will you fix him up?
sure, buddy.
shadow...
I'm okay, I just feel .. really weird...
anne...
we'll figure something out.
parley, can you take me and robot to my workshop?
It's over by the west canals.
I - I don't know the area, but andy will make sure we get there.
grab what you need to take.
BIP

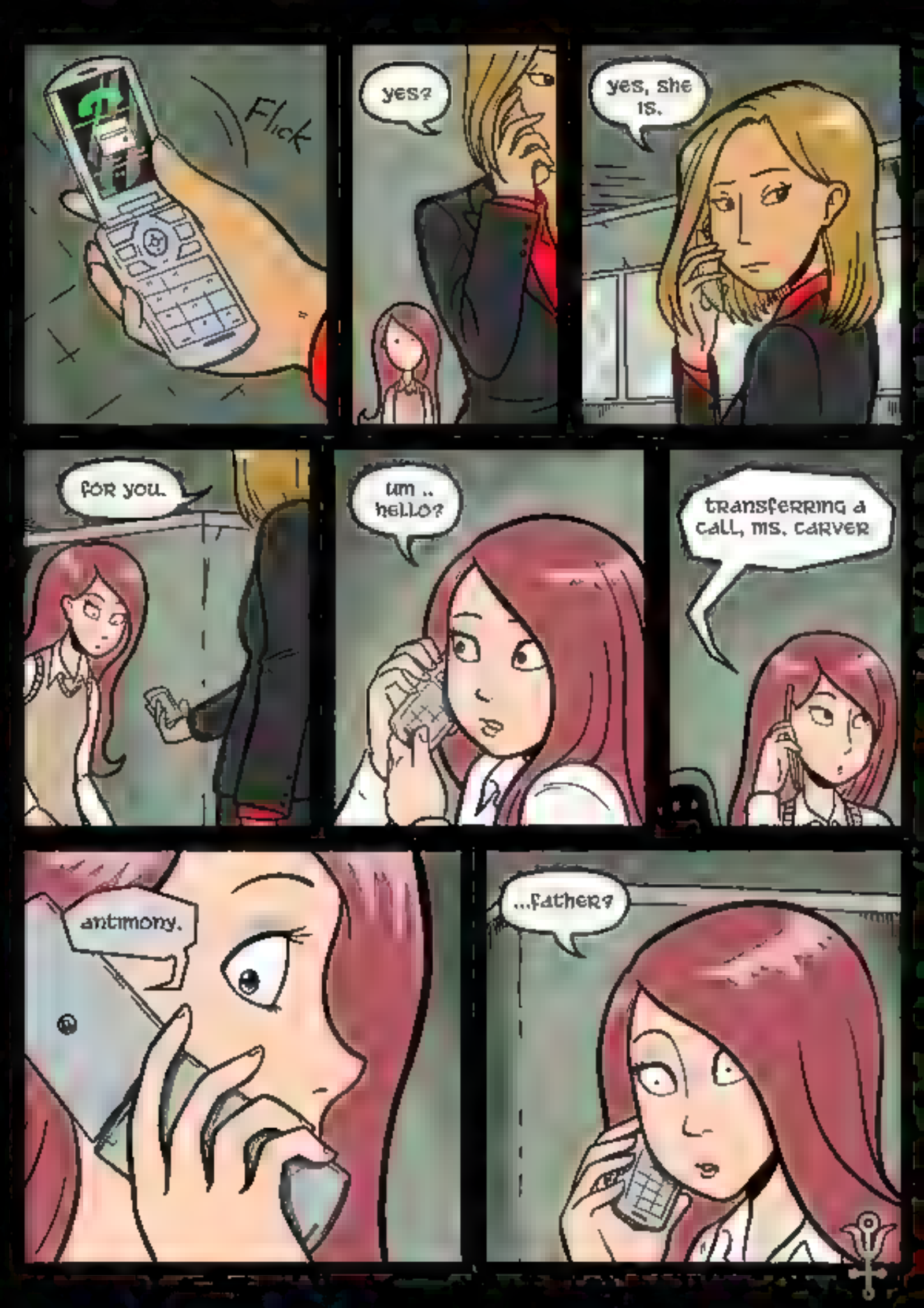

can you put him here?
I'm really sorry, Robby
please see if Shadow is okay...
yeah, Let's get back, see if they need anything.
I got it from here.
Fling
Shadow...
will he be okay?
much better!
Let's get you fixed up!
Shadow he is my good friend.
he does not want me to be lonely.


he told me they were angry that he did not hate the people in the court.
his own family kicked him out of the forest...
poor shadow.
I do not want him to be lonely...
SNIP SNIP
come on, you're going to make me cry...
oh, shadow...
why didn't I realise it before?
I love my good friend, shadow.

soon
catch
good, good.
BIP
there he is!

Shadow, you are three dimensional now.
He was very worried about you, robot.
I brought you a new jumper
I know you liked your old one.
and look, I have a hood just like you!

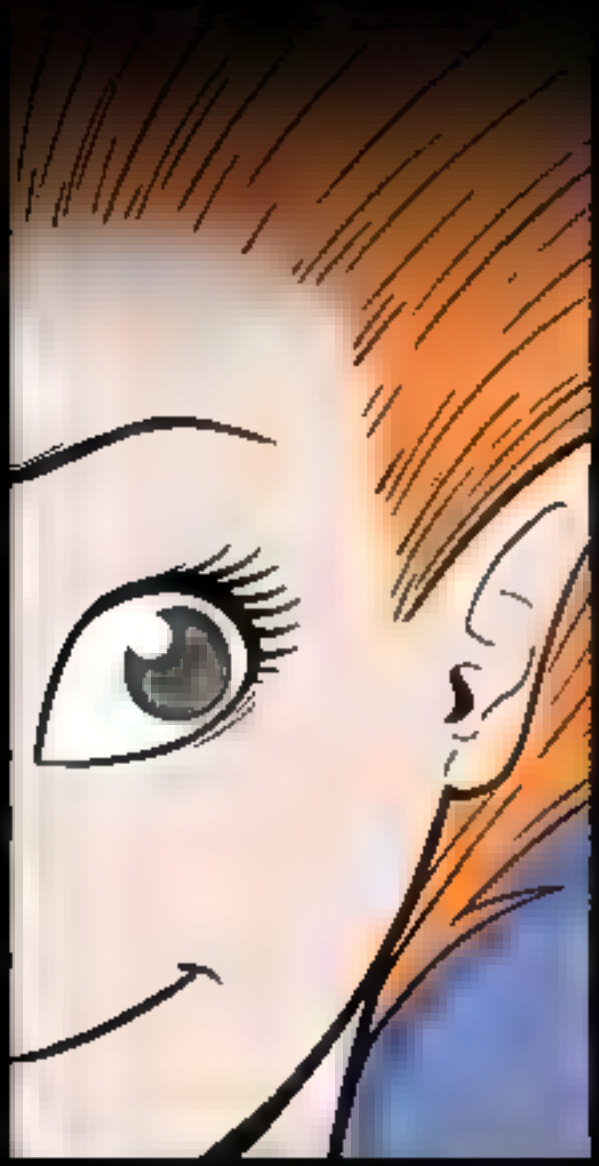
truly, I've never seen anything like it
I wonder what ysengrm would have to say about this!
good work, kat.
you too.
you guys!


Flick
yes?
yes, she is.
for you.
um .. hello?
transferring a call, ms. carver
antimony.
...father?

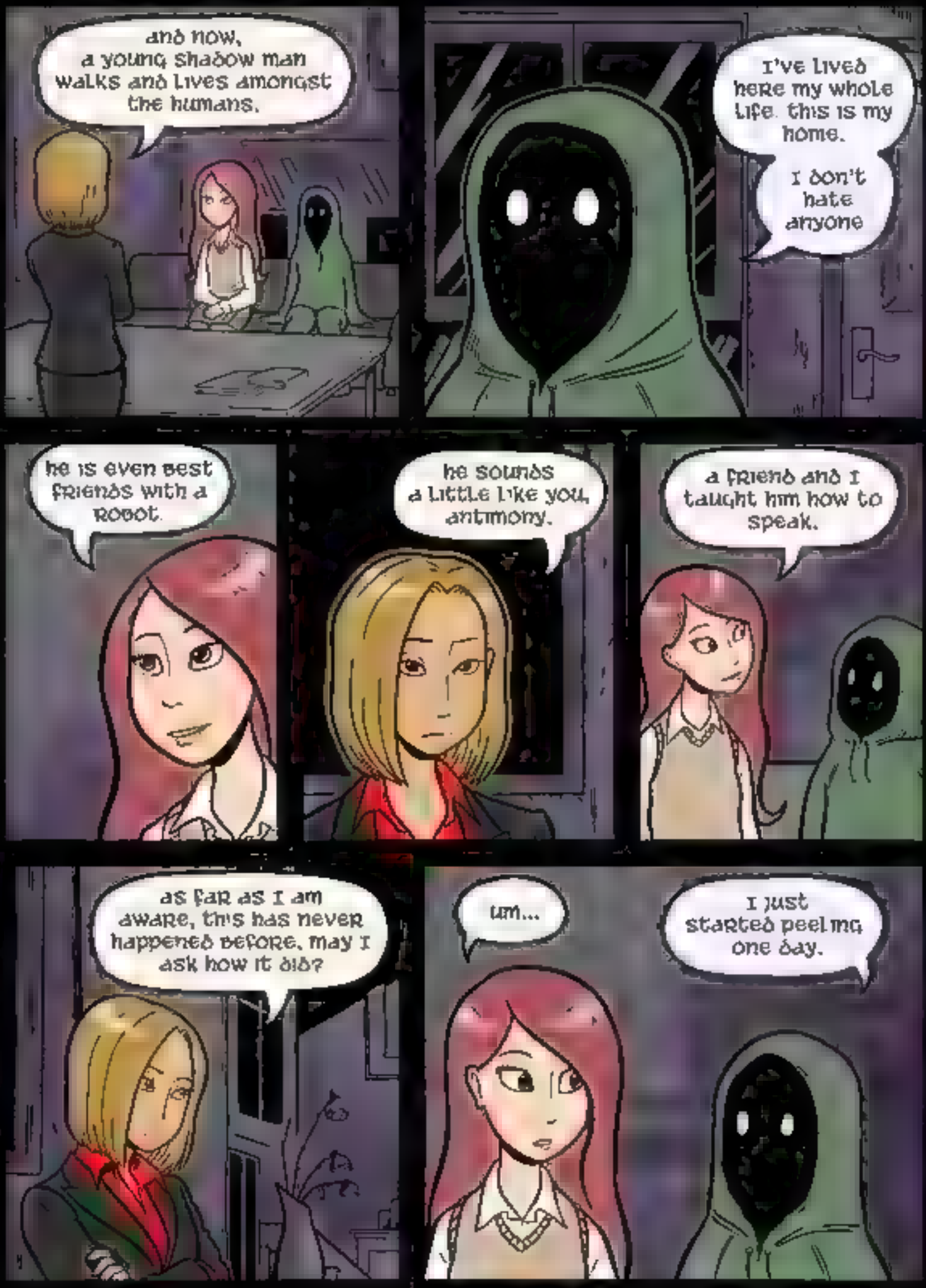
Gunnerkrigg Court

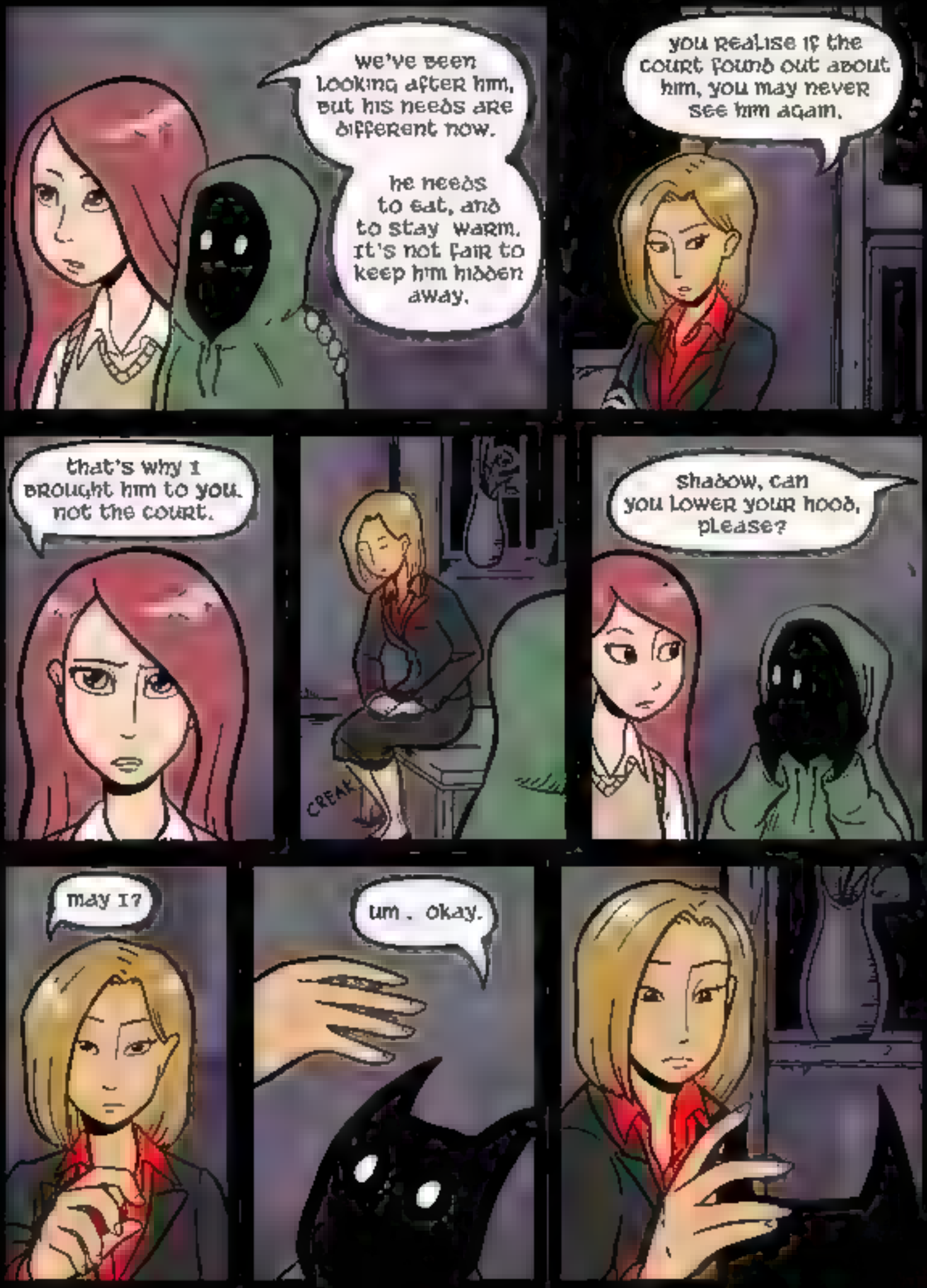
Chapter 36:

Red Gets a Name

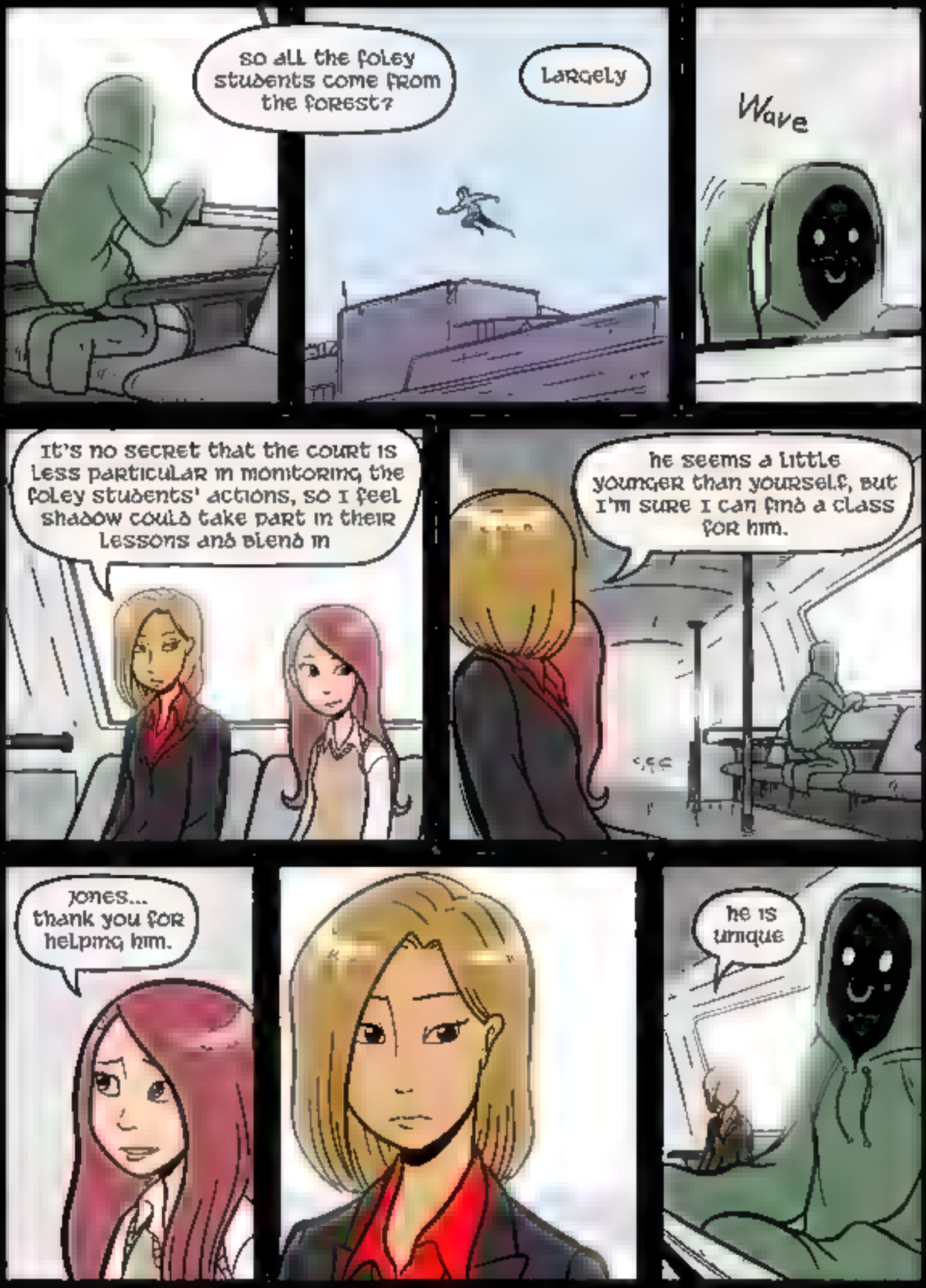


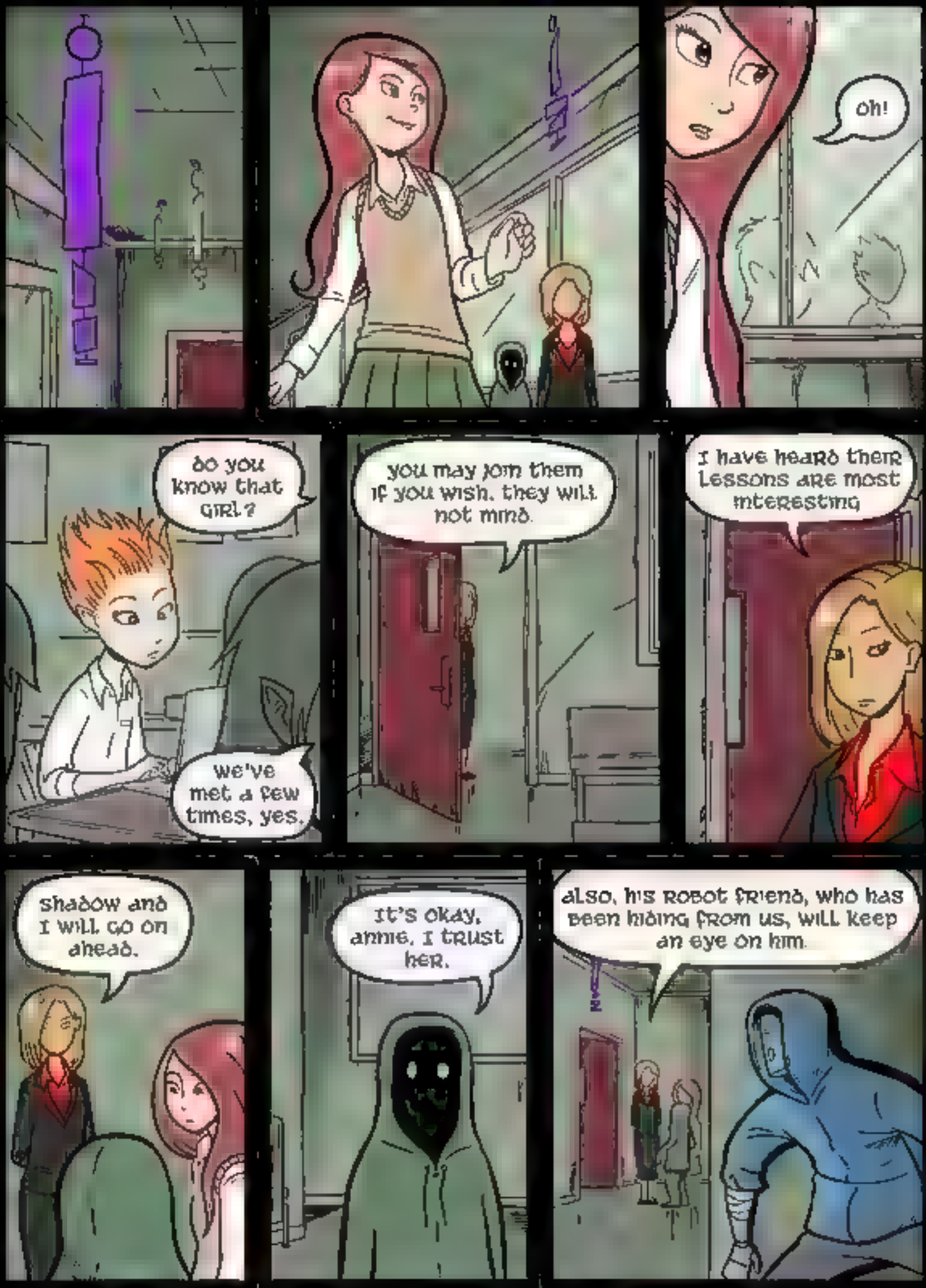
the glass eyed men were nearly human.
born from the body of coyote, and given life by him and brought into this world.
but coyote was so enamoured with humans, he came to see his own creations as imperfect.
he grew bored and left them, forgotten in their meager existence.
they lived in the shadows, and faded from memory, and soon became the shadows themselves.
shadows with jealous eyes, always watching, and hating, the creatures that so captured their creator's heart.


and now, a young shadow man walks and lives amongst the humans.
I've lived here my whole life. this is my home.
I don't hate anyone
he is even best friends with a robot.
he sounds a little like you, antimony.
a friend and I taught him how to speak.
as far as I am aware, this has never happened before. may I ask how it did?
um...
I just started peeling one day.

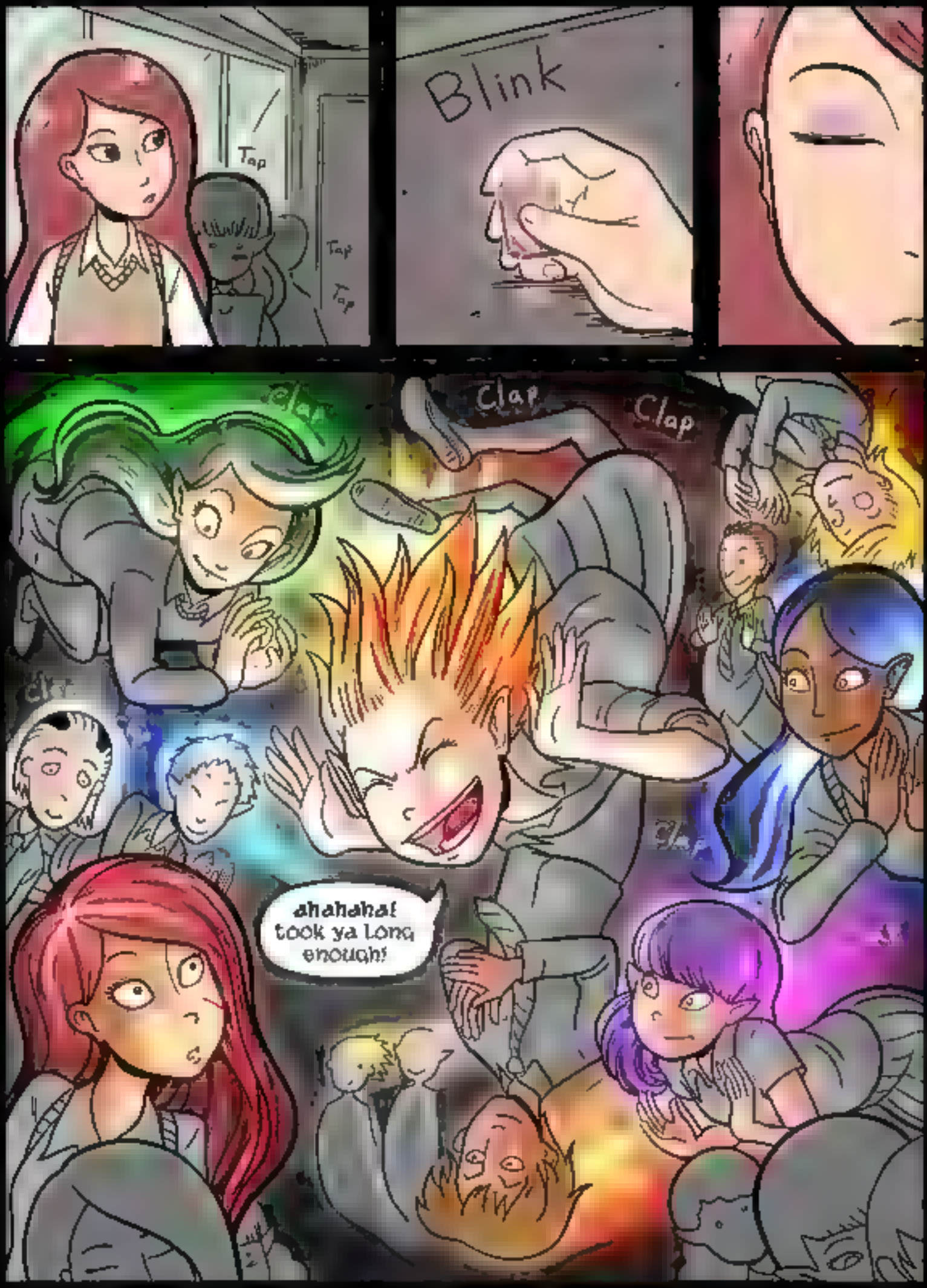

we've been looking after him, but his needs are different now.
he needs to eat, and to stay warm. it's not fair to keep him hidden away.
you realise if the court found out about him, you may never see him again.
that's why I brought him to you. not the court.
CREAK
shadow, can you lower your hood, please?
may I?
um . okay.

Jones...
Shadow, what food do you like?
Um... I really like sweets.
these should still be in date.
Oh!
I think I know where he can go unnoticed.


So all the foley students come from the forest?
Largely
Wave
It's no secret that the court is less particular in monitoring the foley students' actions, so I feel shadow could take part in their lessons and blend in
He seems a little younger than yourself, but I'm sure I can find a class for him.
Jones... thank you for helping him.
He is unique


oh!
do you know that girl?
we've met a few times, yes.
you may join them if you wish. they will not mind.
I have heard their lessons are most interesting
shadow and I will go on ahead.
It's okay, annie. I trust her.
also, his robot friend, who has been hiding from us, will keep an eye on him.
2

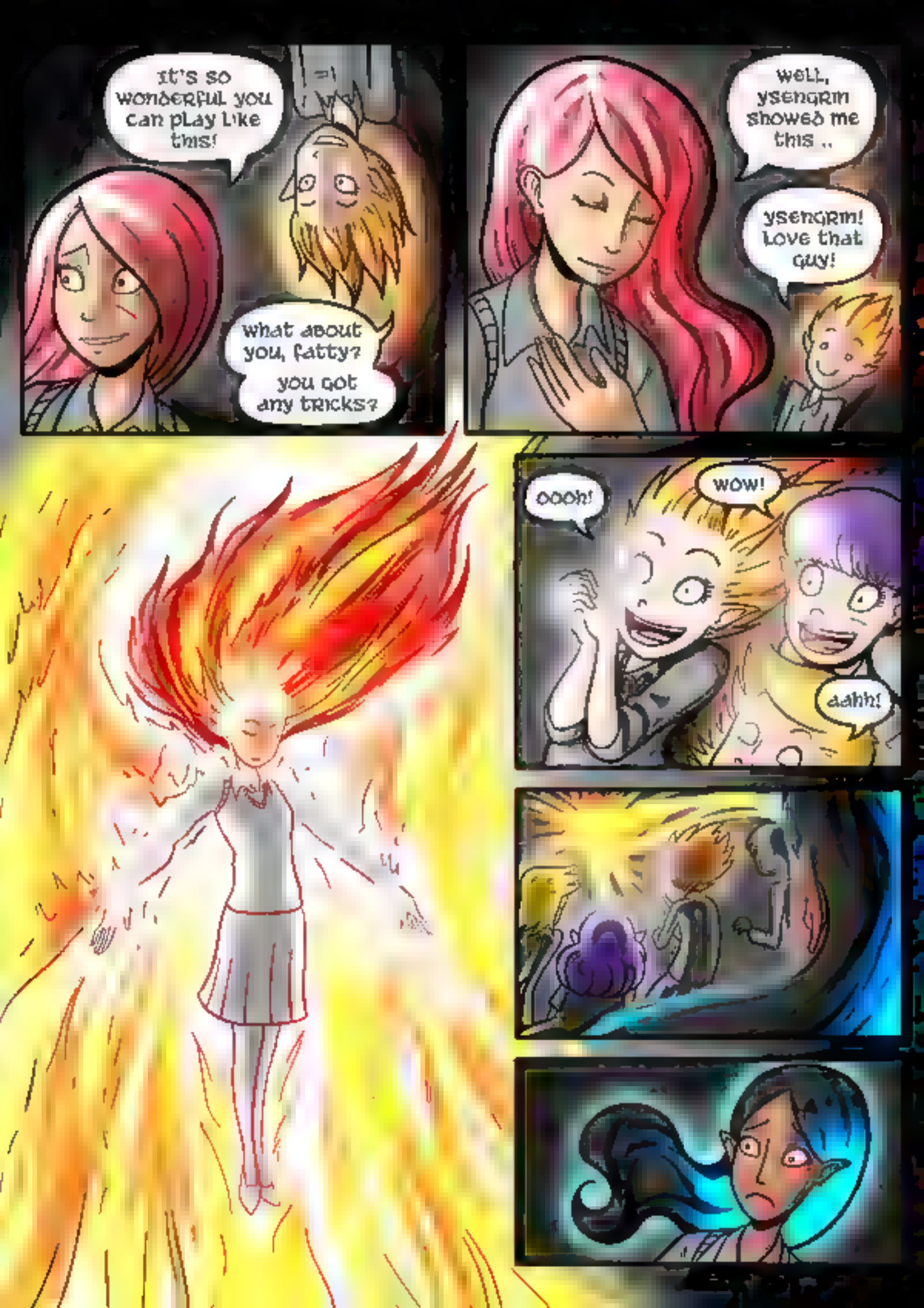
$u = \frac{1}{r}$
$(\theta - \theta_0)$
um, excuse me...
Tap Tap
$\frac{d^2u}{d\theta^2} + u = -\frac{f(1/u)}{h^2u^2}$ which
and $v(\theta) = \frac{GM}{h^2} + A\cos(\theta -$
$\theta_0 = 0$
we have $e = \frac{h^2 A}{GM}$. $r^2\theta =$
so far
$r = \frac{1}{u} =$
$(\theta - \theta_0)$
Tap Tap
$v(\theta) = \frac{GM}{h^2} + A\cos(\theta - \theta_0)$
$\theta = \frac{h}{r^2} = hu^2$ so then we
Tap Tap Tap
$h =$
$2\pi\sqrt{\frac{}{G(M+m)}}$ where
and $b\sqrt{\frac{G(M+m)}{a}} =$
Tap Tap Tap Tap Tap Tap Tap Tap
$e^2)G(M+m) =$
which is
$e =$
Tap Tap
$r = \frac{p}{1 + e\cos\theta}$
$= \frac{p}{1+e}$
Glance
Tap Tap Tap Tap
$r_{max} - a = a$
where
$b = \sqrt{}$
and
Tap Tap Tap Tap


Tap
Tap
Tap
Blink
Clap
Clap
Clap
Clap
ahahaha! took ya long enough!

everyone! I met dis nutjob before coming to the court!
um...
hello hello!
hello hello!
hello hello!
I thought you were all having a lesson!
of course we are!
see?
we's don't need our minds to learn dis junk!
hey! you's still connected to your body!
It's 'cos she's usin' a blinker stone!
whaaat?!

a blinker stone?! you's must be pretty stupid!
well thanks!
let's try dis!
hey!
yaay!
oh! thank you.
dis is dat fish guy I told ya 'bout!
...
why isn't he saying anything?
hahaha! 'cos he's concentratin' on looking good for ya!
don't do that!
flick!

BRRRR
What's this?
It's uh, it's a toy of mine. So you - So you like it?
It's a memory of my real one.
What were you... before?
a badger!
I was a hedgehog!
I can make my antlers come back!
you like 'em? huh? you like 'em?
Dis was my waterfall!
BLOOSH!
ack!
Lookit these flowers I made!


It's so wonderful you can play like this!
what about you, fatty? you got any tricks?
well, ysengrin showed me this ..
ysengrin! love that guy!
oooh!
wow!
aahh!

what else can ya do?!
how about this?
aaah!!
you can move stuff in the real world?!!
coyote taught me how to do it.
coyote?!
wow!
das increable!
humph.
hey! teacher lady!

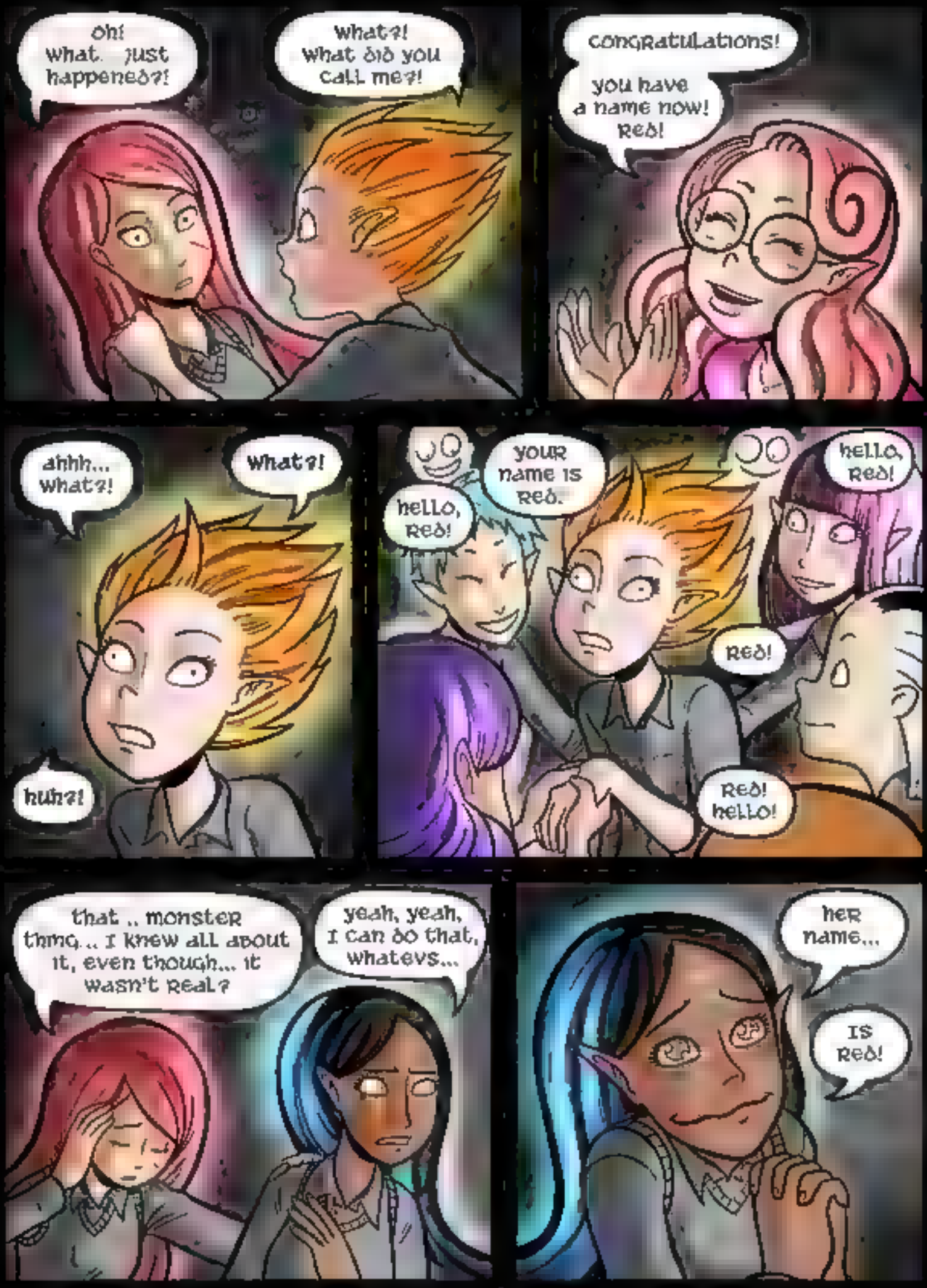
hey!
muh... what? I'm trying to get some sleep.
teach, this class is super boring!
I know! perfect for gettin' some sleep!
I know how to liven things up!
and you woke me up because .
oh, here we go again.
hey, you know what a gol-shogeg is, right?
um... yes, actually.
it's a big worm slug monster
hehehe!

you - you're trying to summon it?!
but it's very dangerous!
ah, don't worry!
it prob'ly looks mean but turns out ta be a nice guy!
yeah, dat always hap-
GROOMK

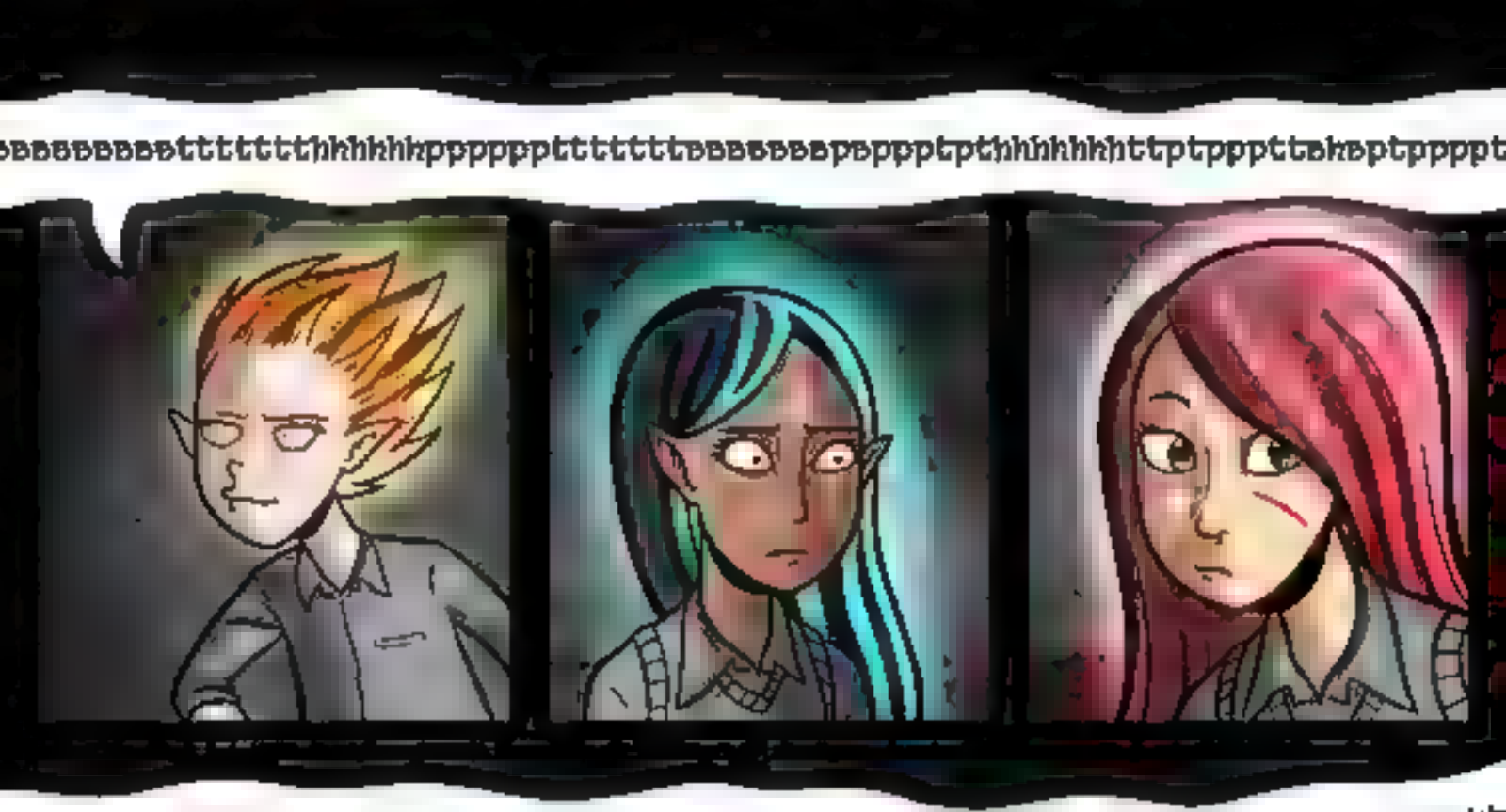
oh! wow well, that's pretty scary.
still wish I was asleep, though.
AHHH!
WAAAAH!!
GRONK!
this isn't a joke! the slightest touch from a GOL-SHOGG will result in instant death!

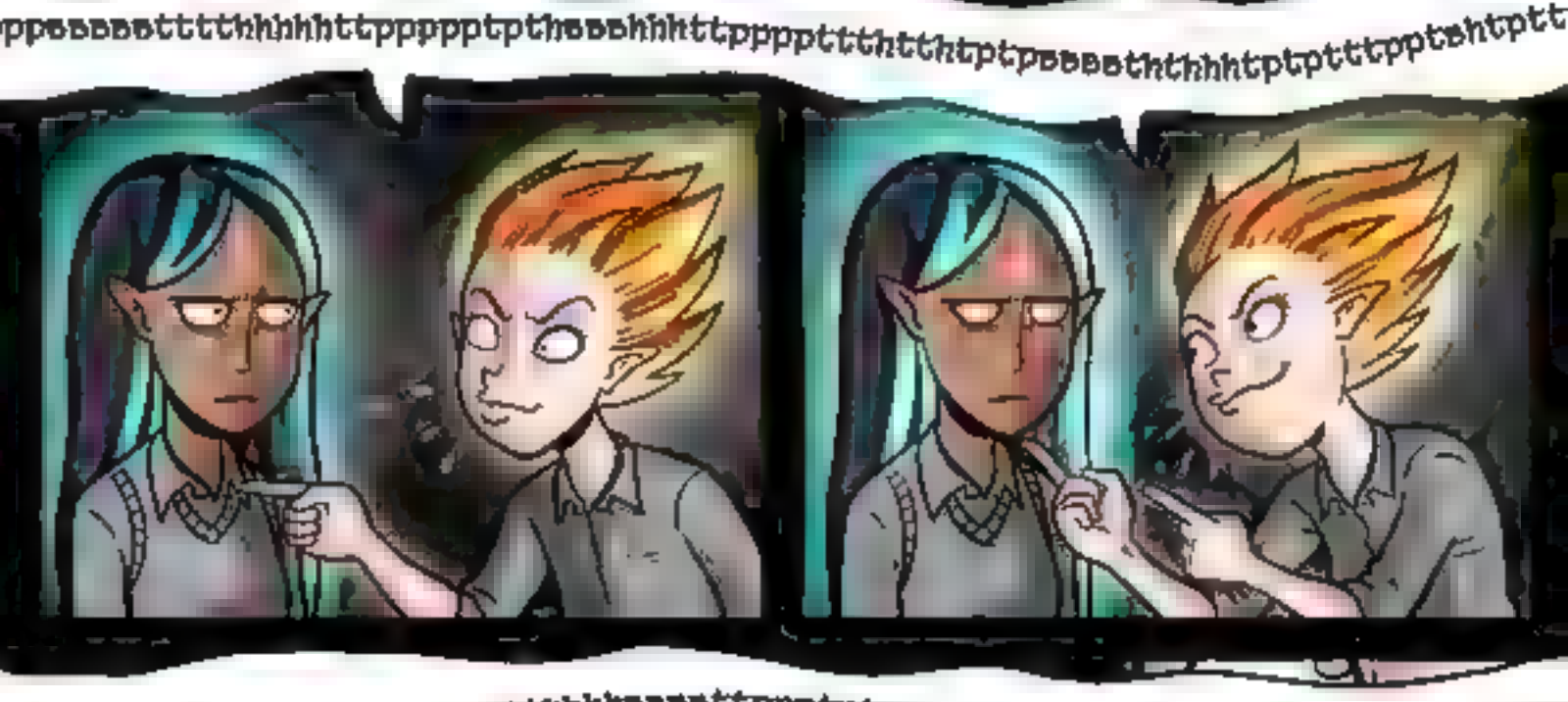
ooh! ah!
guuuuh!
oh no!
she's dead!
she's fine! she's sittin' right here!

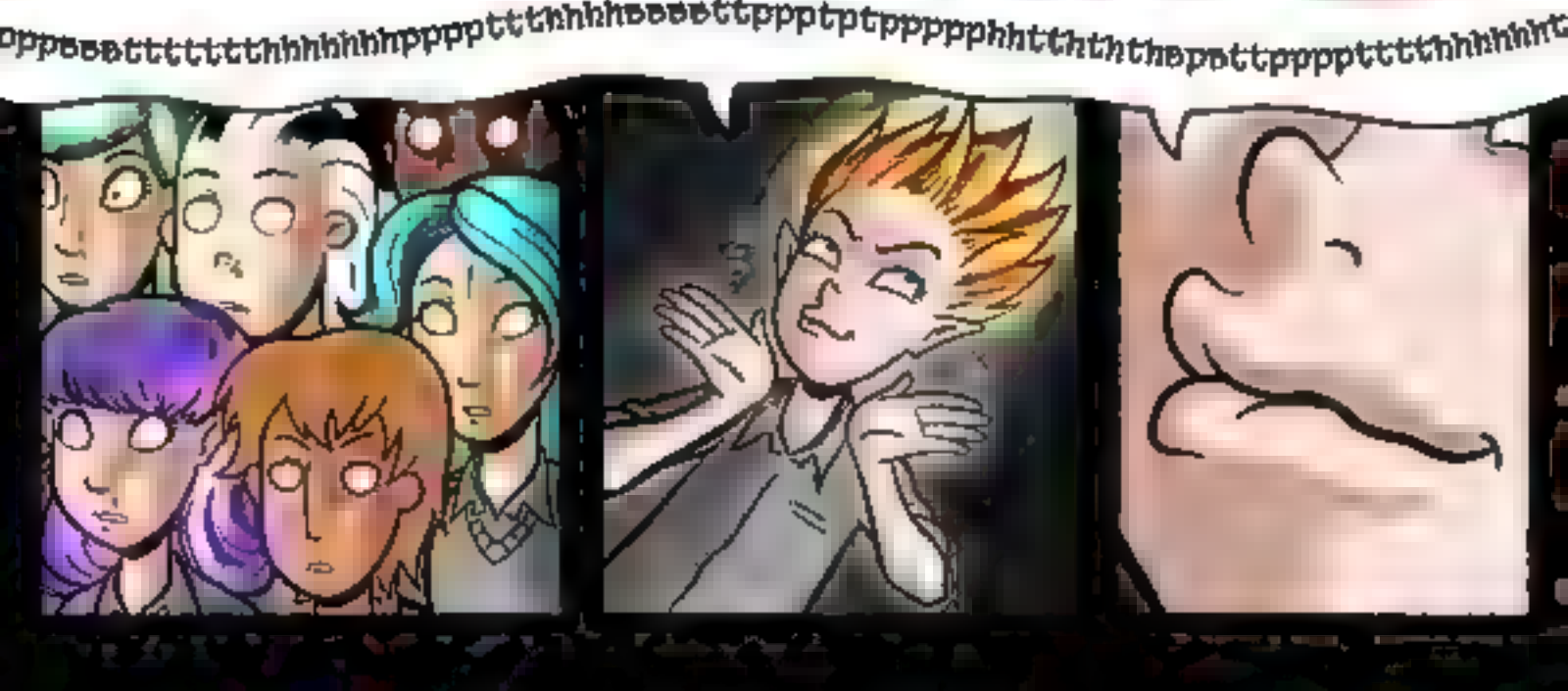
Oh! such a tragedy!
She was so beautiful!
an' such a good friend!
she's makin' you do this, you dumps!
Poke
this shoggy-gog thing ain't even a real thing! she made it up!
Red, how can you be so cruel?!


oh! what just happened?!
what?! what did you call me?!
congratulations! you have a name now! red!
ahhh... what?!
what?!
huh?!
hello, red!
your name is red.
hello, red!
red!
red! hello!
that .. monster thing... I knew all about it, even though... it wasn't real?
yeah, yeah, I can do that, whatevs...
her name...
is red!

It - it struck me that I don't actually know your name...
did I guess right?
you didn't guess at all! you just named her!
we don't usually get names until we finish school!
Red!
Red!
What a cool name!
now I don't gotta come to dis stupid class any more!
now I can get a job! and
my own clothes!
ooh! we can hang out all the time!
can.. can I hang out with you too?
ppeee

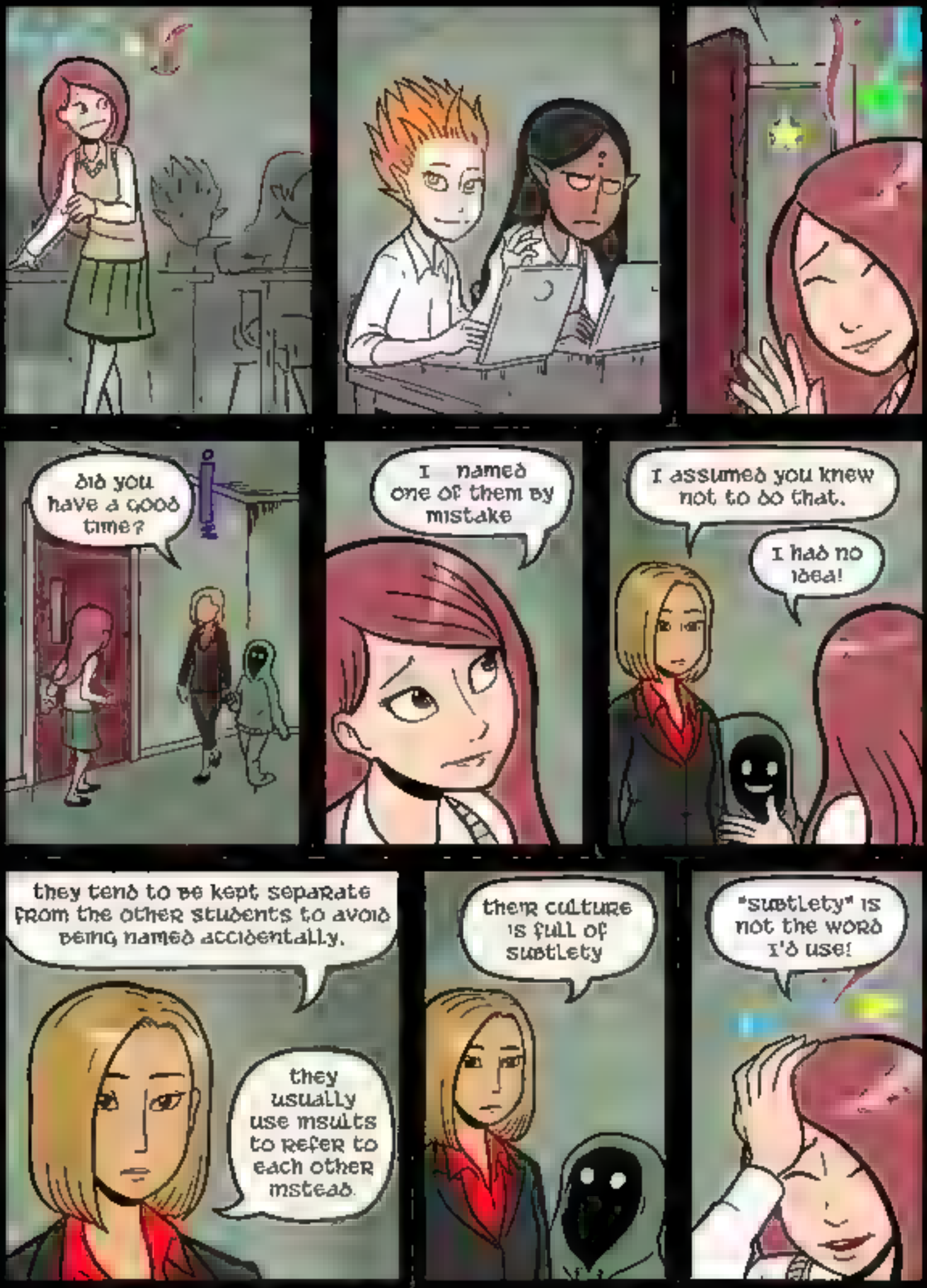


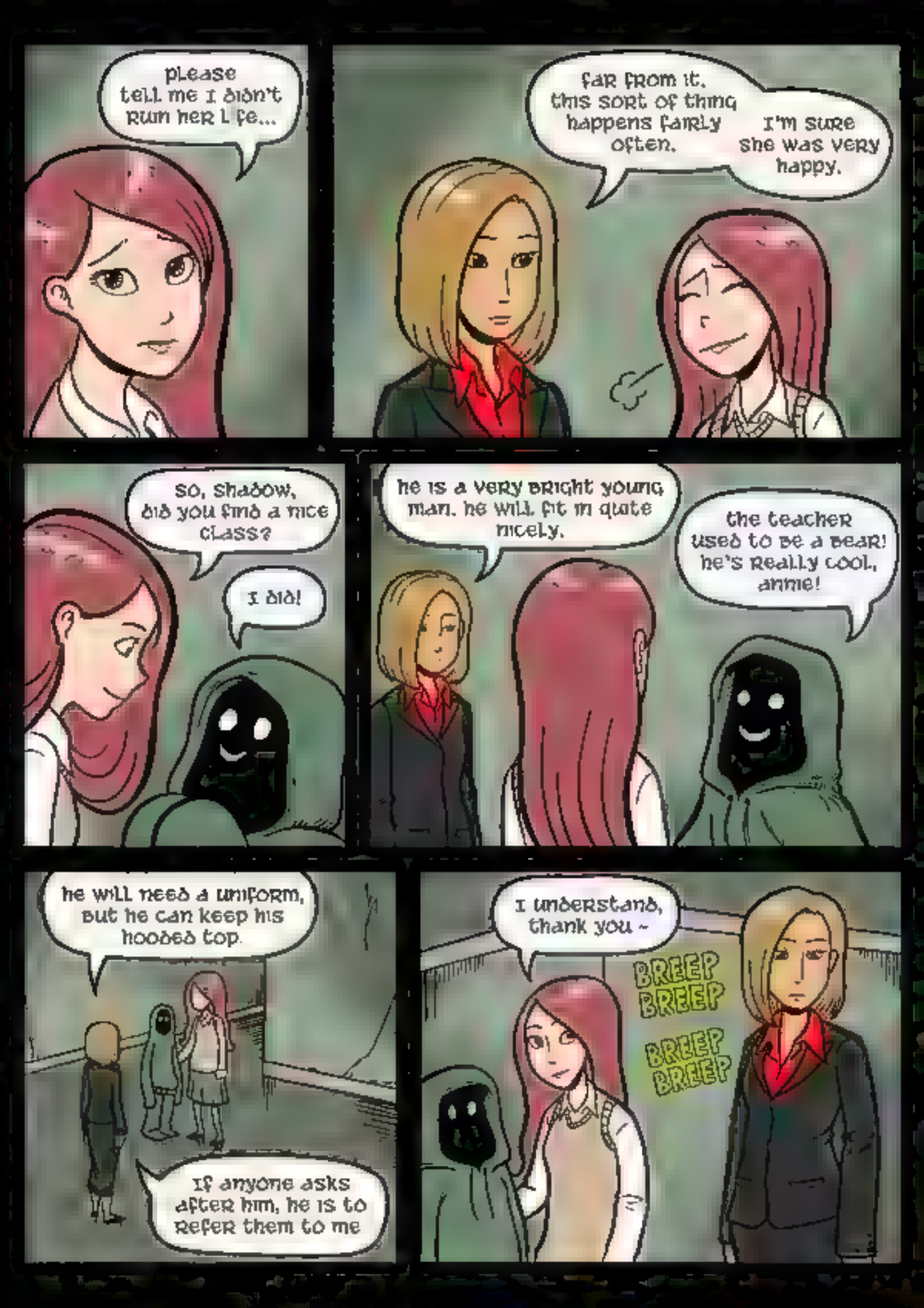




ttpppppppppppppttttttthhhhpppt!
are yo finished
ppppppttthhhh!
ooh! fight! fight!
fight! fight!
fight!
yaaay!
such .. such good friends...

oh, what have I done?
hey! hey you! can you give me a name too?!
yeah! me too!
and me!
me too!
give me a good name!
I want a name too!
and me!
name me too!
give me a name!
ZAP

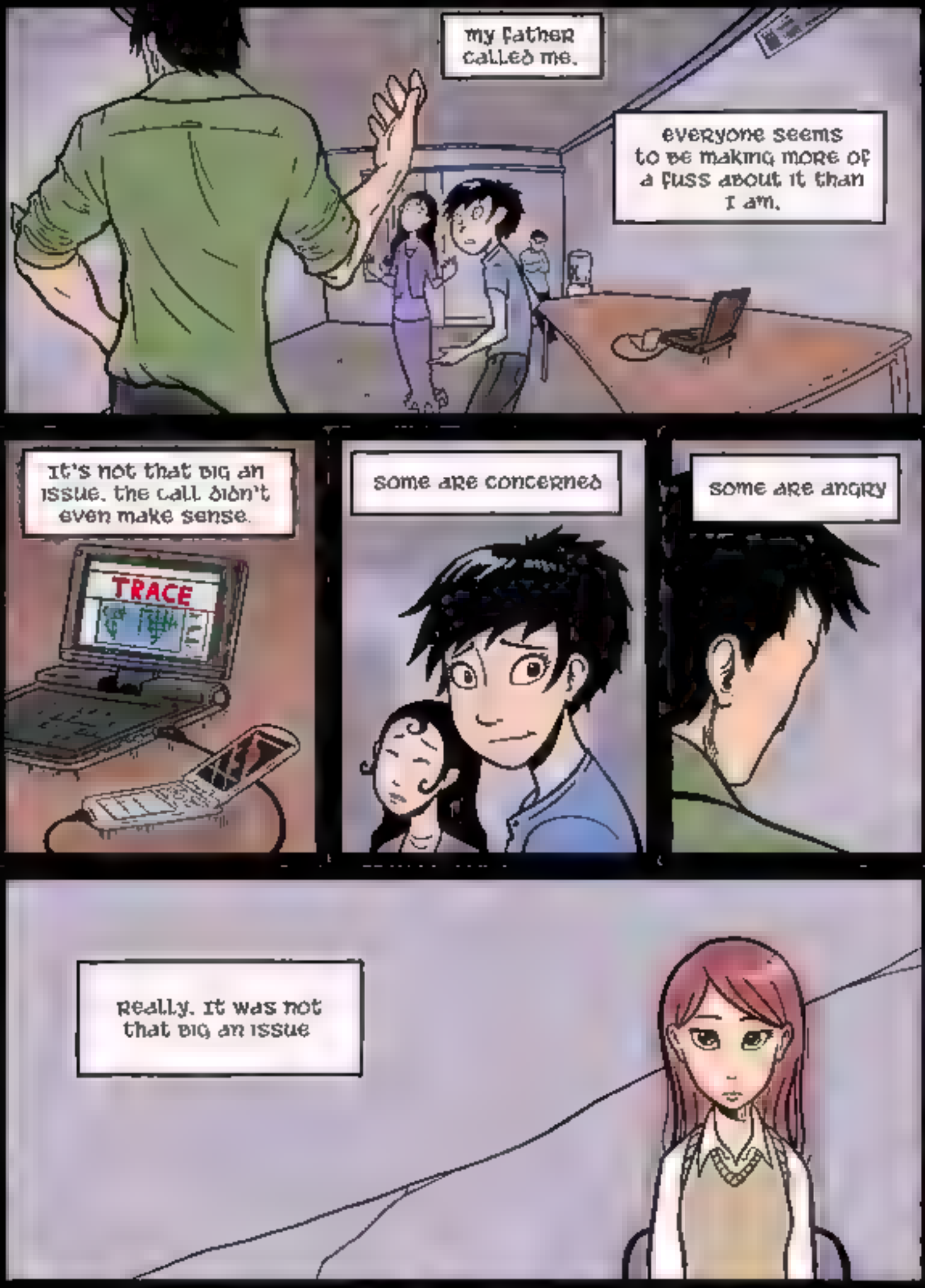

did you have a good time?
I named one of them by mistake
I assumed you knew not to do that.
I had no idea!
they tend to be kept separate from the other students to avoid being named accidentally.
they usually use insults to refer to each other instead.
their culture is full of subtlety
"subtlety" is not the word I'd use!


please tell me I didn't ruin her life...
far from it. this sort of thing happens fairly often.
I'm sure she was very happy.
so, shadow, did you find a nice class?
I did!
he is a very bright young man. he will fit in quite nicely.
the teacher used to be a bear! he's really cool, annie!
he will need a uniform, but he can keep his hooded top.
if anyone asks after him, he is to refer them to me
I understand, thank you ~
BREEP BREEP
BREEP BREEP

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 37:

Microsat 5


my father called me.
everyone seems to be making more of a fuss about it than I am.
It's not that big an issue. the call didn't even make sense.
TRACE
some are concerned
some are angry
Really. It was not that big an issue

Mrs. Donlan was in the middle of saying something, but she just glanced at her husband.
and she promptly ushers everyone else out of the room.
Glub Glub
here, give your hands a rest, eh?

ah... how did that happen?
you idiot.
he must think you're so stupid.
I don't even want any wa~
guh huh...
COUGH COUGH!
HACK!
w-what's happening?
I'm a mess!
Tap Tap
good, he didn't notice.
OR he's pretending he didn't...

okay, okay
back to normal.
back to normal.
ah... may as well be using a calculator.
anyway. about the call.
did it seem strange to you?
yes he said-
oh, uh, wait.
here, write it down.
now then, I don't think jones will mind us borrowing her phone.

It's my portable door!
W-where does it go?
Just to the other side of this wall.
Handy when you need to slip away
Shall we go and figure out this message?

may I see?
I don't really know very much about kat's father.
I know he teaches maths to the higher years, but that's it.
so... you think it's some kind of message?
yeah. you know what one of these is?
no, sir.
It's called a one-time pad.
It's like a key that decrypts a coded message.
your father and I used to use them all the... time.
hmm...
Flip Flip

well now, this is no good.
It's the right page...
are you sure this is everything he said?
yes, sir
he didn't say hello, or goodbye, or something you might ignore?
Scratch
well, the very first word he said was my name.
ah! antimony or annie?
he'd never call me annie...
haha, of course
Scribble
that's it! oh, wow, we have to get a move on
he needs to use microsat 9
so. my name was just part of the message?
he wasn't really calling me at all?

antimony .. how well do you know your father?
he is a quiet man
ah...
let's get going and I'll tell you a thing or two.
we used to hang out together all the time, your father and I.
we had this friend, a girl called Brimnie, and she, well...
she took a shine to him.
he was a handsome guy!

haha, she was pretty obvious about it. that's just how she was.
outwardly, he was the same old tony, but I knew he was torn up about it.
what am I supposed to do?!
well do you like her?
I don't know! how am I supposed to know?!
you just know!
unacceptable!
you either like her or you don't, tony!
that's an unacceptable answer, sonny!

that doesn't sound like my father!
haha! you have to understand, he was a completely different person when you got to know him.
at first, I thought it was funny. I'd never seen him in a mess before, and over a girl!
but as it went on I realised how distraught he was. and for such a simple thing.
it was so strange. anyone else would have been happy...
the more he beat himself up over brinnie, the quieter he became when we were in a group.
frankly, brinnie was starting to get offended.
as much as she seemed to like him, she wouldn't ask him out. she was waiting for him to do it
I mean, you know how girls are-
uh...
motion to strike previous comment
granted.

anyway, it went on for weeks and weeks
In the end, Surma and Anja arranged for us all to meet one evening "by chance" and go out.
so we should go to a movie, yeah? they got some new ones!
sure, sure.
oh yes, we will come too!
yeah, great!
all he had to do was ask Brinnie if she wanted to go too.
It was the big moment.
but
I have work to do.

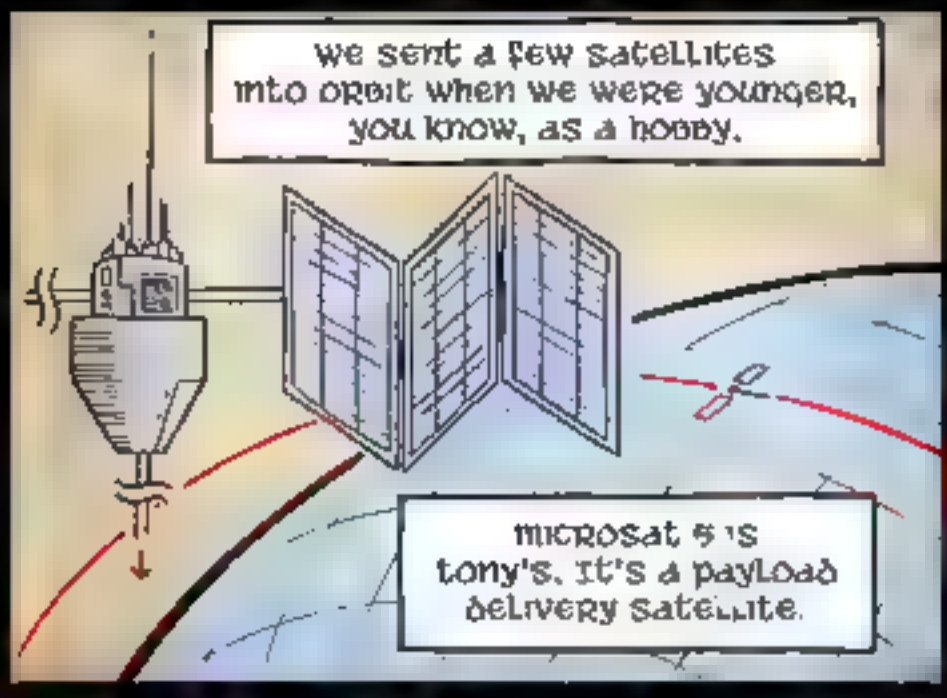
Brimme left without a word, and so did he.
I .. don't think I understand.
the point is, with tony, the smallest thing can carry the greatest weight.
there are plenty of ways he could have contacted me directly.
If he didn't want you involved, you may never have known about it.
But the fact that he called you, and had the court track your location, no less, tells me that he wanted to hear your voice.
even if only briefly.

tony
tony tony
how strange. it almost makes him sound like.
like.
a person
not just "father"
I'm glad he had a friend like mr. donlan.
SURGICAL BLADES
STERILE
100 pcs
someone who understood him.
even if that someone just broke into a medical supply room.

okay, we still have some time.
oh! we're fairly close to the forest.

aye, we can only launch from a few specific areas.
the court isn't too keen on having things fly above it.
FZZAP

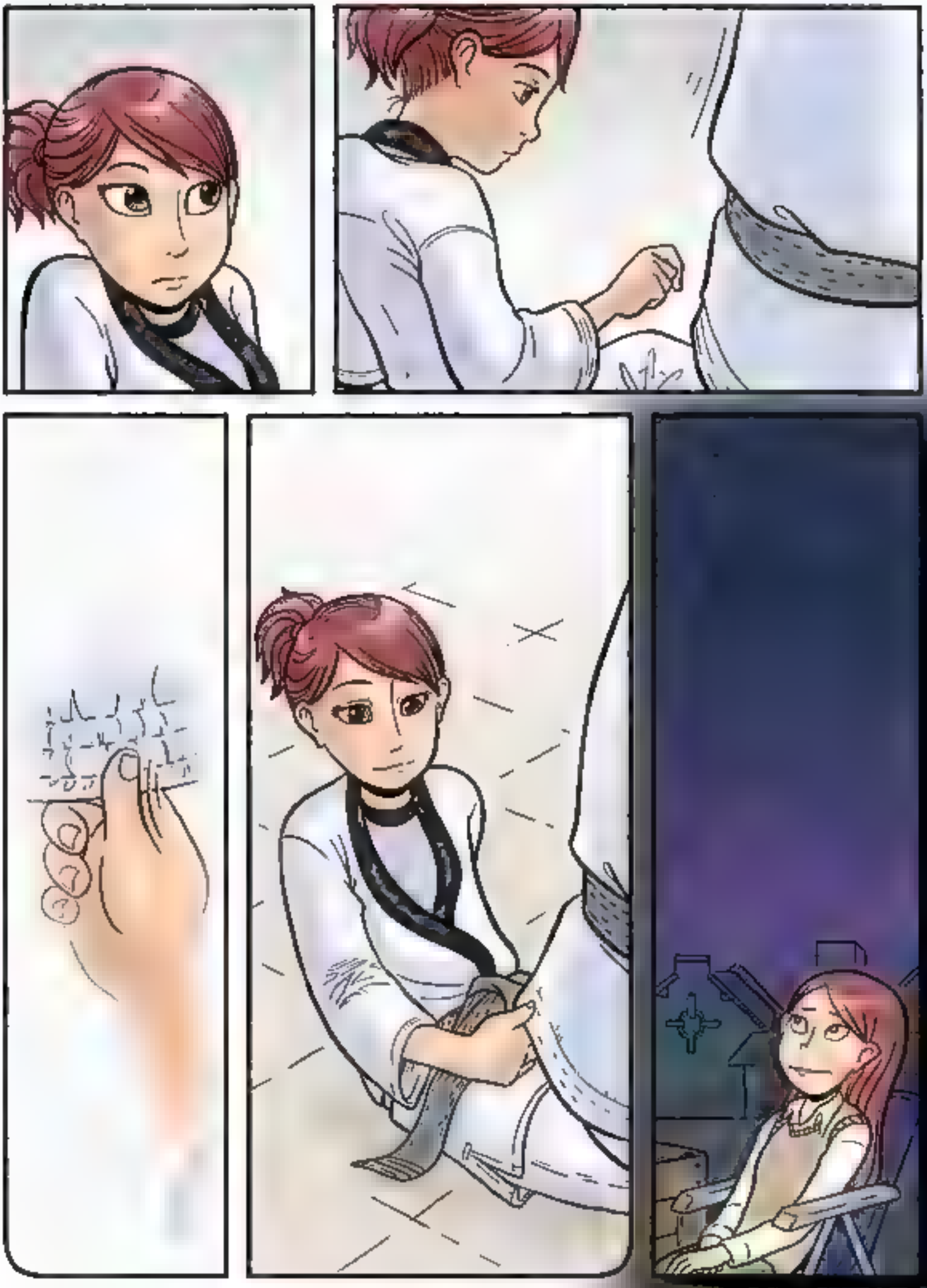
so this satellite will help us get these supplies to my father?
that's right.


we sent a few satellites into orbit when we were younger, you know, as a hobby.
microsat 5 is tony's. it's a payload delivery satellite.

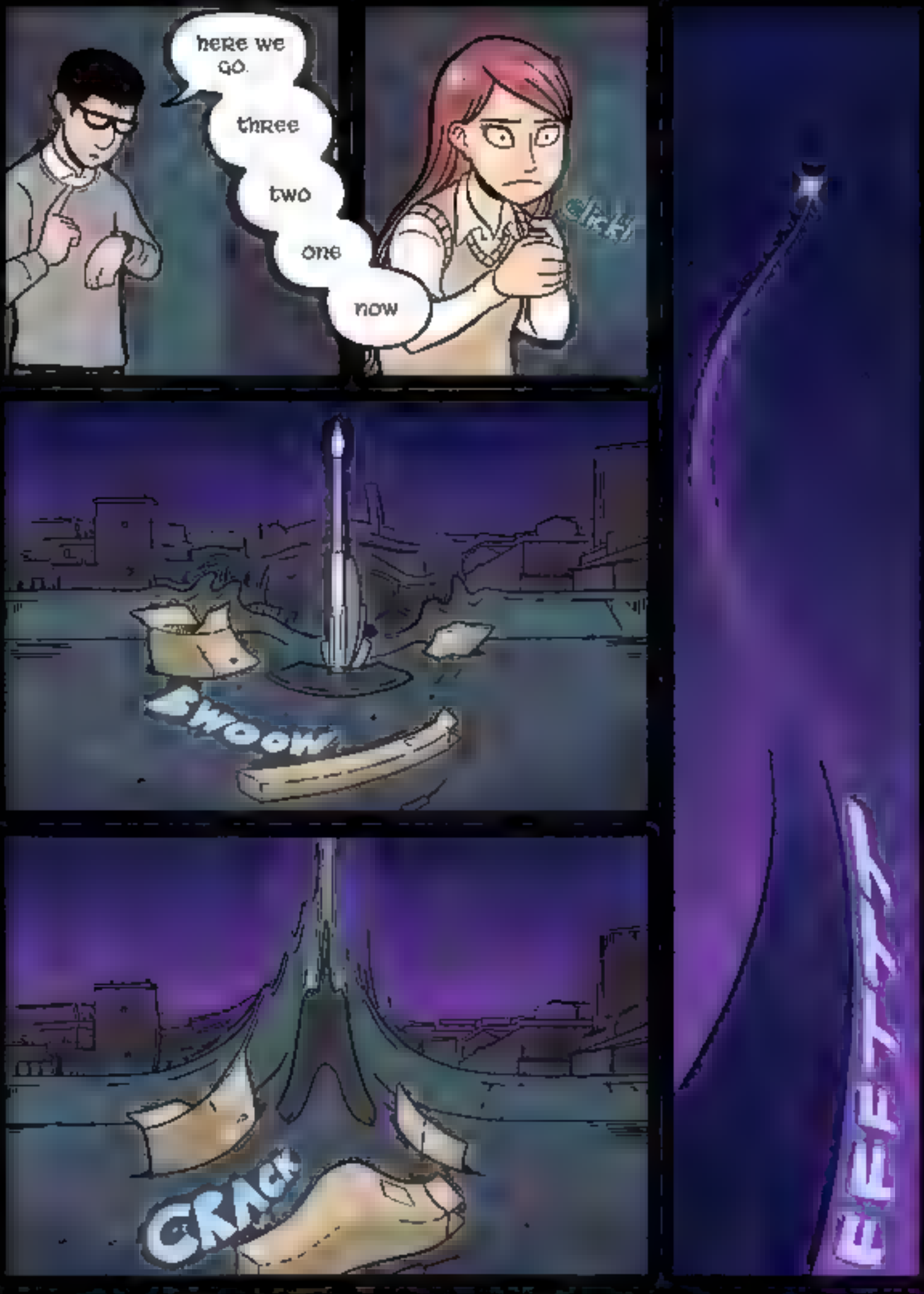
without the instructions he sent us, it'd be impossible.
only he knows where it will be or where it will go.

I can only assume it's still up there.

SIR, I NOTICED YOU SEEM ABLE TO MAKE OBJECTS APPEAR OUT OF THIN AIR.
HAHA! JUST A FUNCTION OF MY WIFE'S AMAZING COMPUTER
THE PORTABLE DOOR, TOO.
I ALREADY HAD SOME OF THIS STUFF IN STOCK, BUT WE HAD TO STOP BY TO GET THE SCALPEL.
I'VE BEEN RUNNING ANOTHER TRACE ON JONES'S PHONE TOO.
NO LUCK, I'M AFRAID.
LOOKS LIKE TONY DOESN'T WANT TO BE FOUND.



... and that's when jimmy jms says~
jmmy jms?!
uh... I mean, mr. eglamore.
you didn't hear that from me...
BEEP BEEP
oh! it's time!
wh-what do we have to do?
don't worry, the scalpel is loaded into the rocket, and I coded the launch vector according to the instructions.
all you have to do is press this button when I say.
microsat 9 and the rocket will do the rest.
how will we know if it worked?
we wont.
we'll just have to trust it.


here we go.
three
two
one
now
SWOOW
CRACK
EFFFFF

What kind of rocket was that?!
Heh, a little something of my own design!
So we really won't know if it worked?
Well, let's try this. It's about all I can do.
Here, quick, quick.
I-I see something!
There it is!
That's MS3 in orbit. You should see the rocket soon

they flew away...
that's it?
that's it.

I'm glad we had this opportunity to talk, antimony.
Oh, he's going to say I remind him of one of my parents.
I guess this is where I'm supposed to tell you that you remind me of your mum or dad.
Well, sorry, but you're your own person.
I'm happy my daughter has you as a friend.
thank you, sir...
shall we get back then?

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 38:

Diving

hah!
hah!
CRASH!
hah...
hah...
ugh!
RRRaaGHH!!
not mine!
not mine!

I ~ I don't wanna!
I don't want to see her!
stop trying to run away!
she needs your help.

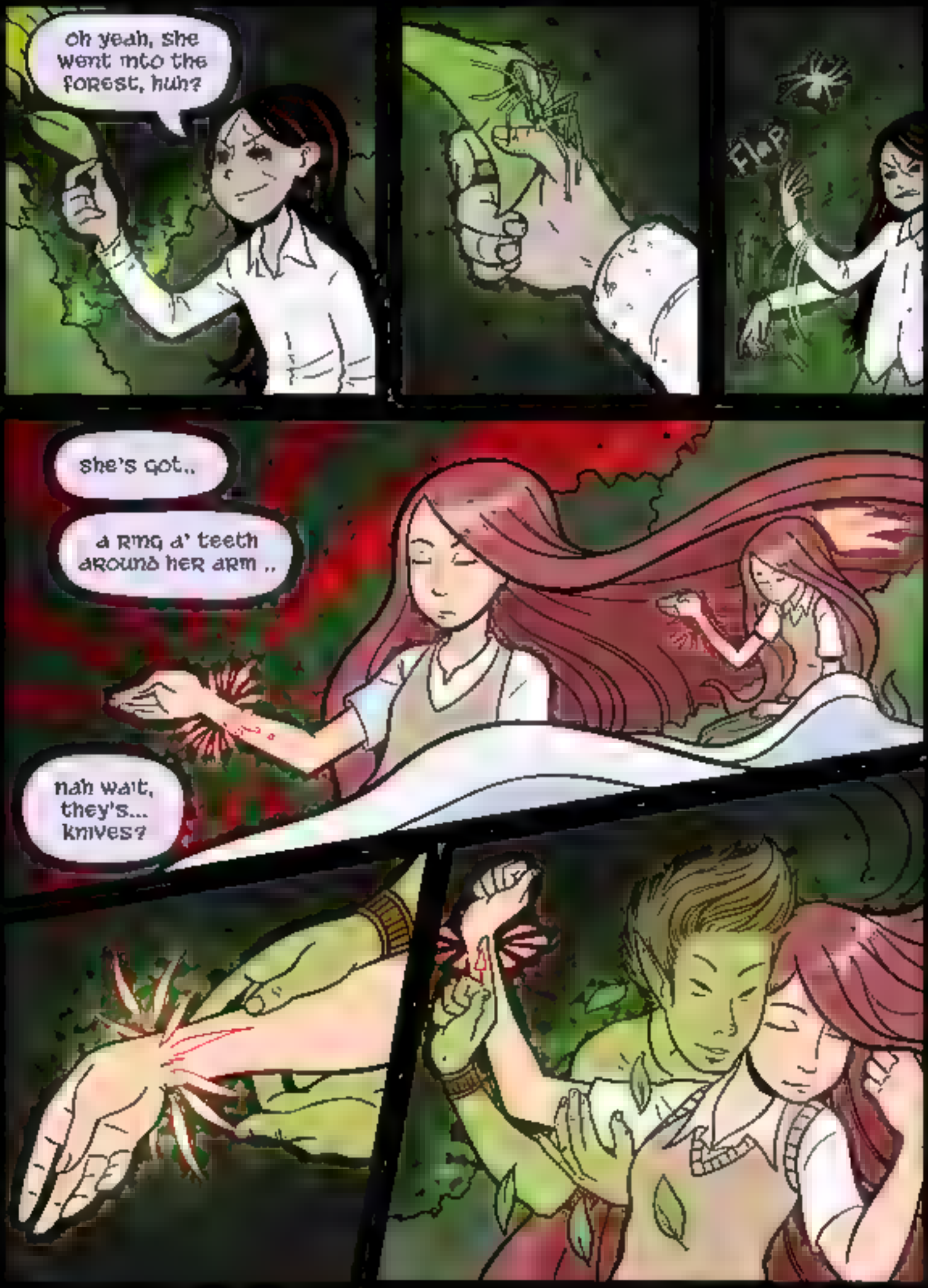
huh
z-zimmy! Gamma...
I didn't hear you come in. .
heh
what happened?
she... collapsed. we don't know why.
what are you doing here?
she's just. . asleep? out cold? I dunno.
the beeper's a bit much, yeah?
they said it was a precaution. I couldn't stand the damn noise.
ALM
ONLY

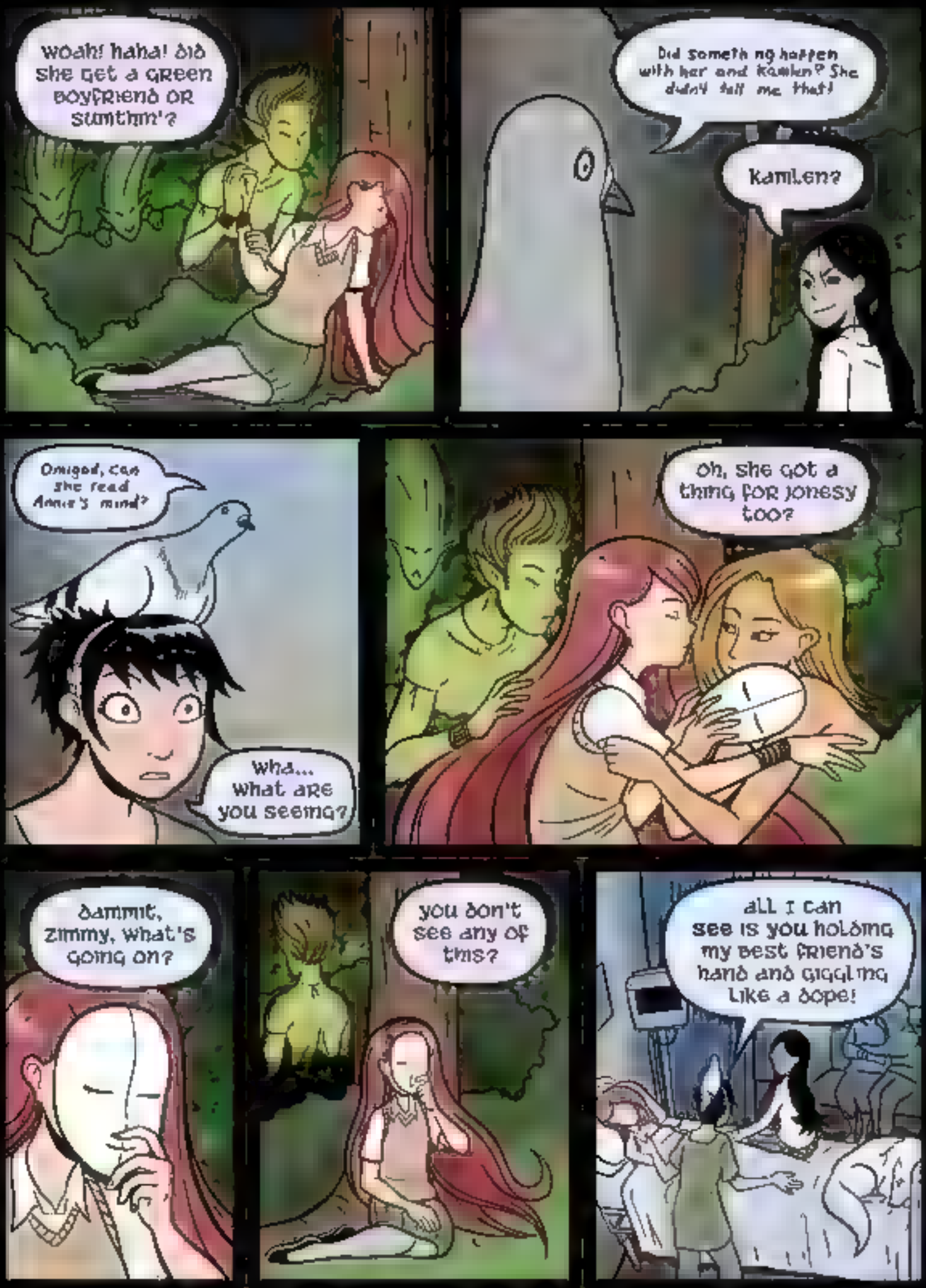
why are those two even here? I got enough to think about
what's so funny?
hey, I been hearing some things about you.
..
what things?
things that might make yeh dress diff'rent?
act diff'rent?
make you wanna remind people yer still a girl?
hahahaha!

D-Did Paz say something?!
who have you been talking to?
heh, just the rats.
there are no rats here.
haha, well then, who knows?
robot, kick her out.
robot?
renard?!
what have you done?
Are they okay?
you gonna keep flappin' or do ya want me to help?

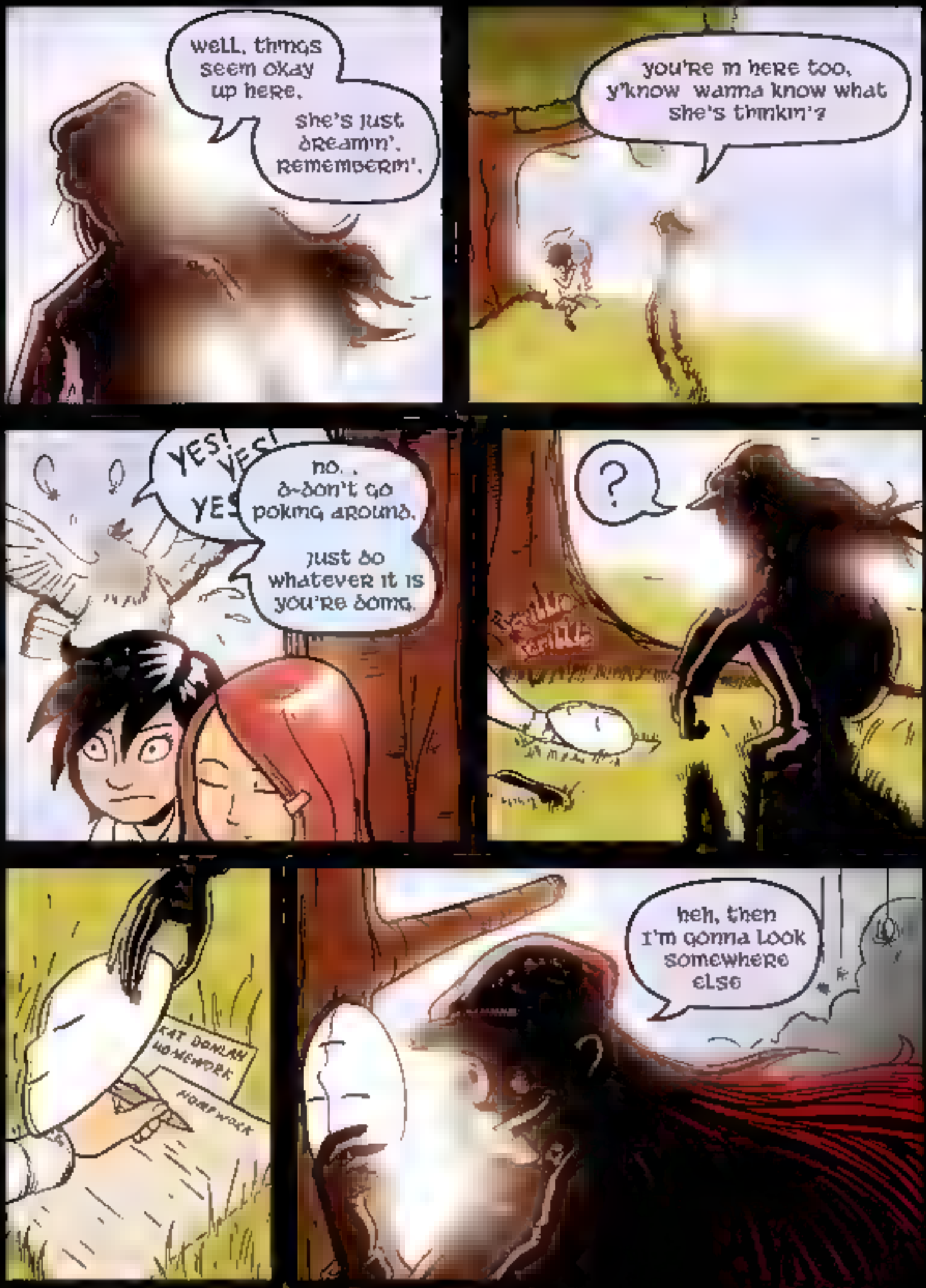
you... you can help?
I can try
please...
Whoa, wait is that safe?
annie said you two always need to stick together.
Pat Pat
was that a yes?

L-Let's have a look at you then, carver.


oh yeah, she went into the forest, huh?
Flop
she's got..
a ring a' teeth around her arm ..
nah wait, they's... knives?


woah! haha! did she get a green boyfriend or sumthin'?
Did something happen with her and Kamlen? She didn't tell me that!
Kamlen?
Omigod, can she read Annie's mind?
Wha... what are you seeing?
Oh, she got a thing for Jonesy too?
dammit, Zimmy, what's going on?
you don't see any of this?
all I can see is you holding my best friend's hand and giggling like a dope!

don't tell me you're looking into her dreams...
But she knew about coyote's mind... and Kanien
hey what about you guys shut up and let me do this?
"you guys?"


well, things seem okay up here.
she's just dreamin'. rememberin'.
you're in here too, y'know wanna know what she's thinkin'?
YES! YES! YES!
no.. d-don't go poking around.
just do whatever it is you're doing.
?
KAT DONLAN HOMEWORK
HOMEWORK
heh, then I'm gonna look somewhere else

heh, you want this, yeah?
haha!
huh..
you got no fight in you, carver.
what's gon' on?

ah what's this?
huh, pretty hot in here
CARVER?

no wonder you're like this, carver.
what? what do you see?
there are bones? stickm' outta her.
they go .. waaaay off into the sky
huh...
her dad?
what?
what?

what's the matter? don't like him?
I HATE HIM! I HATE H.M!
I never met the guy.
but she's always got an excuse for him, you know?
"oh, he has his reasons."
"he must be doing something very important."
this is the second time she's ended up in an infirmary bed and he doesn't even know about it.
well, I can't see where he is... but I can try to stop whatever he's doin'

here we go...
message from your little girl, mate!

URGH!
hahaha!
I think he got
the point!
huh.
okay, this is
where things start
to go bad...
can ya get
gamma?
h-hey...

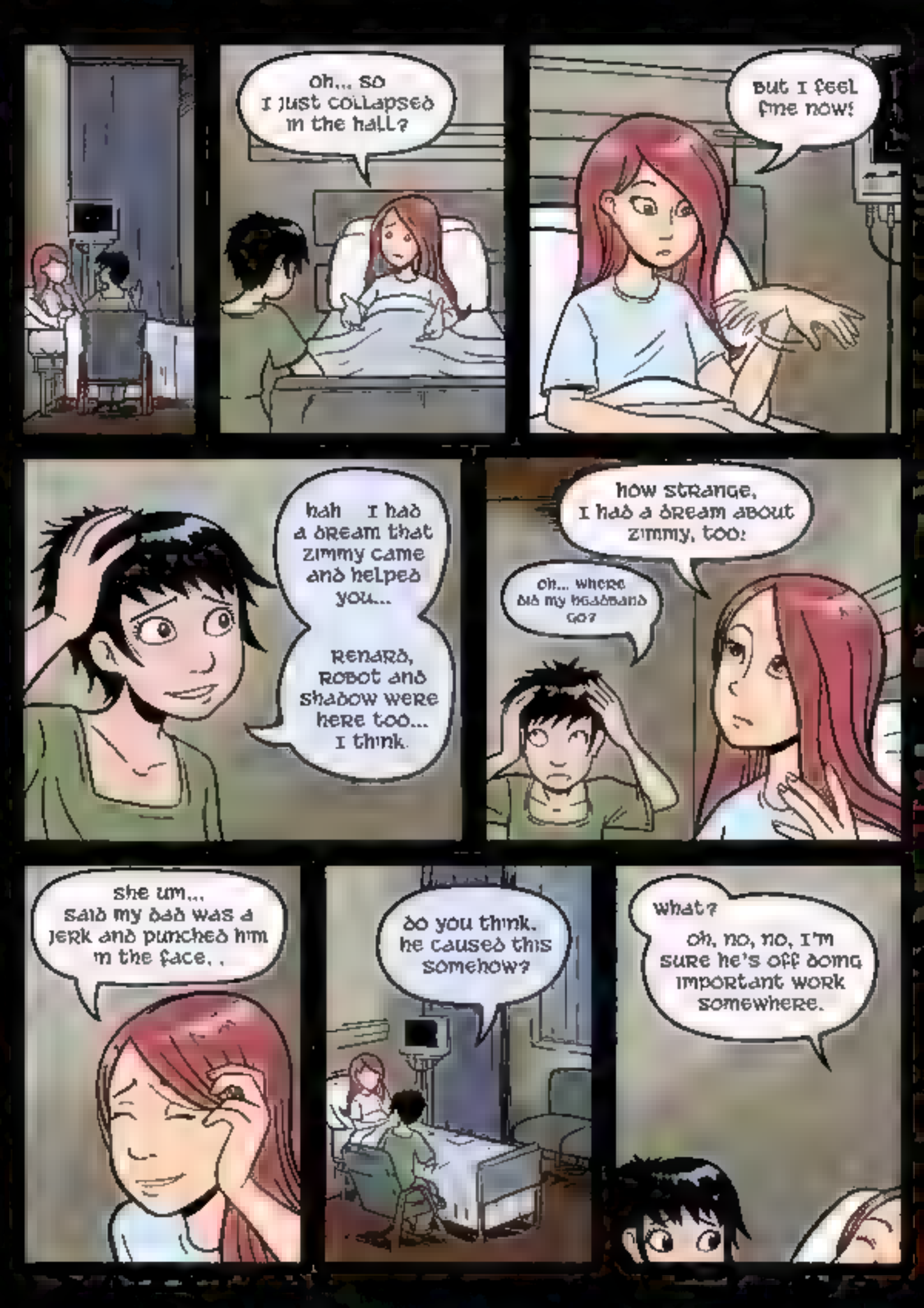
argh, dammit, carver!
I don't wanna know about yer million boyfriends!
I'm in love with zimmy!
wh .
I just figured I could get a kiss or something.
bleagh!
she's a deranged psychopath!

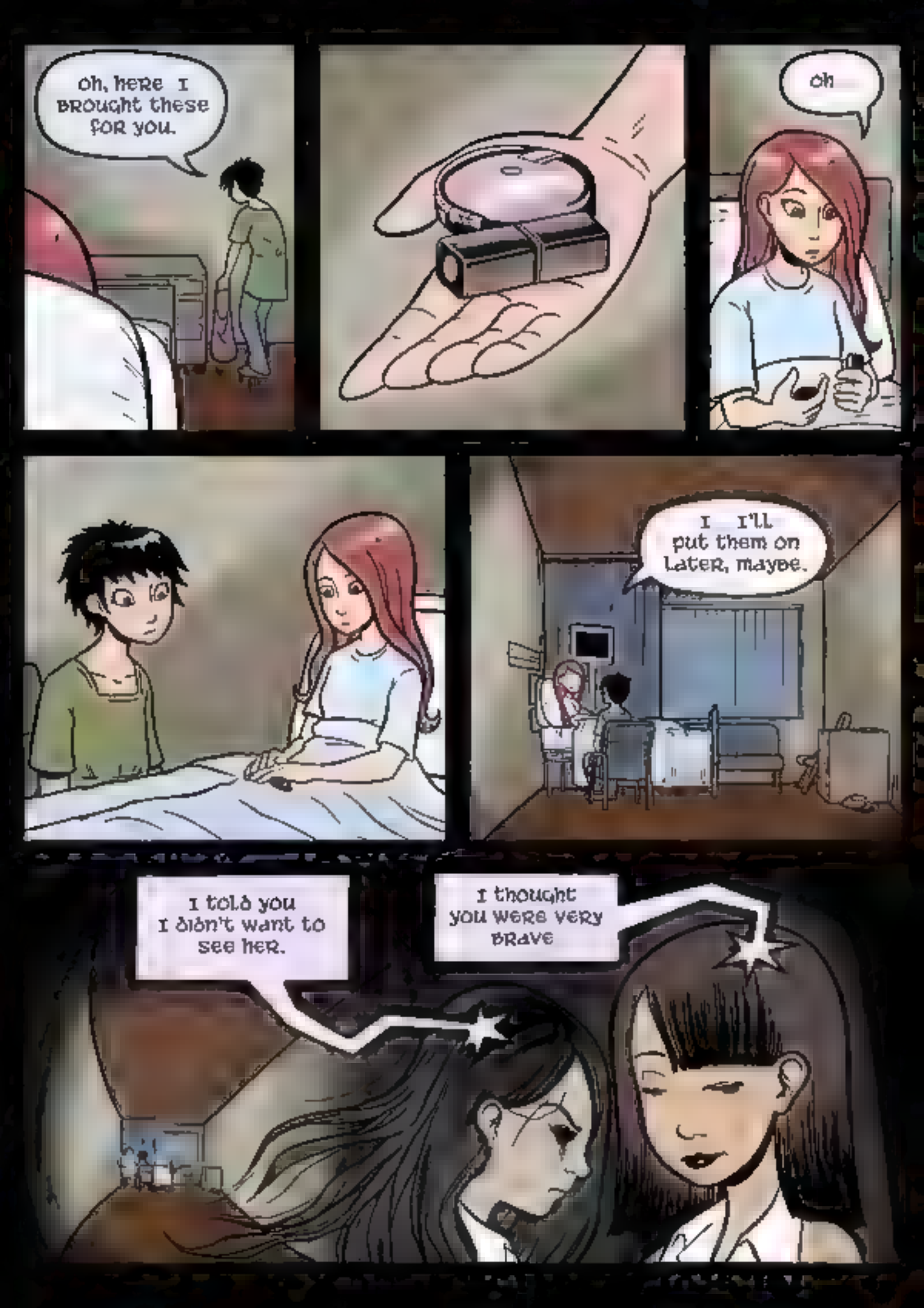
a deranged-
oh yeah? well...
yer dad's a jerk!
CRACK
hahaha. you got yer fight back, carver!
what the
CLATTER

hey, what happ-
ahhh!
ahhh! no! get away!
d-don't touch me!
whoa! whoa. what's your problem, man?!
I-I'm... terrified of you..
wh... why?
It's the way you look to me ..
...
and how do I look?

Squeeze
If you're so scared...
why did you come here?
cos you can't always run from what scares ya.

hi!
you're awake!
I am!
and so are you!
I was so worried!
there's no need to worry, kat!
but... would you mind telling me what's going on?


Oh... so I just collapsed in the hall?
But I feel fine now!
Hah I had a dream that Zimmy came and helped you...
Renard, Robot and Shadow were here too... I think.
How strange, I had a dream about Zimmy, too!
Oh... where did my husband go?
She um... said my dad was a jerk and punched him in the face. .
Do you think. he caused this somehow?
What?
Oh, no, no, I'm sure he's off doing important work somewhere.


oh, here I brought these for you.
oh
I I'll put them on later, maybe.
I told you I didn't want to see her.
I thought you were very brave

are you sure you don't want them to know you helped?
heh, nah. who cares?
can't have anyone out there thinking I'm a nice person, haha!
I think you're nice.
that's all that matters to me.

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 39:

The Great Secret

you know, you don't have to wear that whole outfit every time we go across the bridge.
they don't really care for formality.
yeah, I can tell by your... casual attire.
well, I'm not the medium yet.
and this is more comfortable for climbing.
umm, look, antimony..

considering what's happened these past few weeks, the court has been going easy on you
but they aren't happy with you skipping out on the detentions you've been getting.
if you hadn't been directly summoned by coyote, they might not have let you come at all.
oh. well, I appreciate your concern, but if they really wanted to stop me, they would have.
now, if you will excuse me.
ah, much better!

you smell like the court again.
I missed you too, ysengrin.
are we going to the village today?
no. coyote wishes to see you.

Boo!
Boing
HAHAHAH
boo to you

GOOD! GOOD. IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, YES!
SO ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHY YOU CALLED?
I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF CLASS, YOU KNOW!
HAHAHA! YES! YOU SEE, THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MATTER!
I AM BORED!
YOU WILL TELL ME STORIES!
STORIES.
YES! STORIES ABOUT ME!
I'M READY NOW. YOU MAY BEGIN!

coyote, you don't need me to tell you stories.
you have plenty of other people who could do it.
like ysengrim
no!
his stories are as boring and stupid as he is!
well! if you're going to be like that, I don't want to tell you any!
I want to go to the village and see my friends.
who said you have a choice in the matter, fire head girl?

BLEEAAAAH
I know you're just playing around, coyote.
ha!
would you think I was playing if I did.
this!
please! pleeeease tell me stories! oh please! pleasepleeeease!

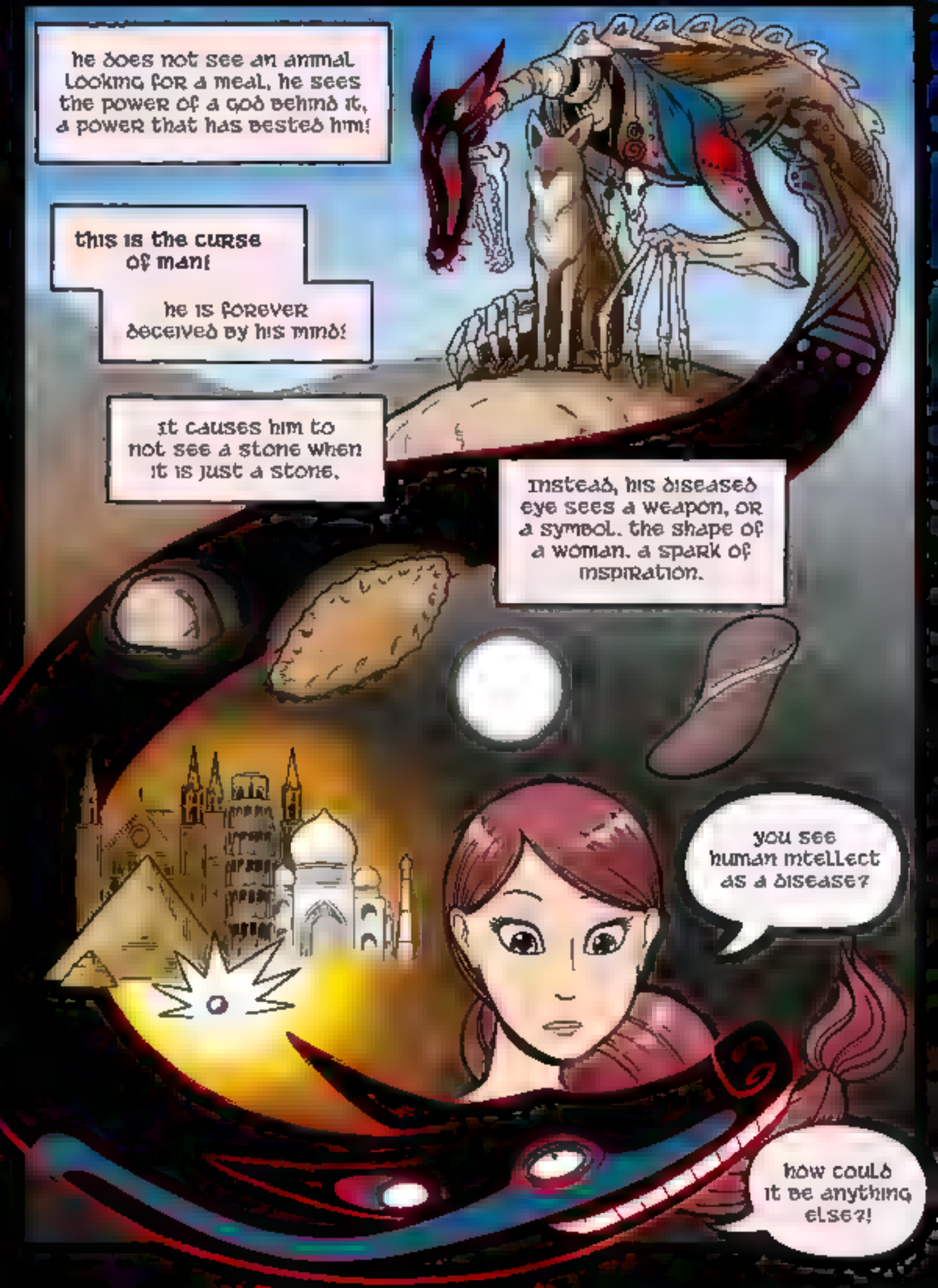
coyote! have some dignity!
Waah!
ysengrim! make her tell me stories.
Leap
um... antimony... perhaps you could.
you don't need to listen to him! he's acting like a big baby!
ysengrim! you're so stupid and useless! can't even make a little girl do what I want!
that's it! I hate when you talk to ysengrim like that!
I'm leaving!
Wait, wait!
If you stay I will tell you my great secret!

no!
coyote! please!
your great secret?
you are interested, yes?
perhaps
then it is decided!
RRRRR...
ysengrin!
IGNORE HIM! IGNORE HIM!
you may start with a story about my incredible strength!
fine...

and so, fire head girl told coyote lovely stories about how amazing he is.
but what was this dark secret he promised to tell her?
now we shall find out
who are you even talking to?
hahaha!
so you want to know my secret, do you?
well, you were the one making a fuss about it, not m-
then I will tell you!
the reason I love humans so!
the reason ysengrin seethes with anger!
my secret ...
is this...

I
DO NOT
EXIST!

...
can I go home now?
hahahaha!
no!
consider this, fire head girl.
a man is in the desert!
he sees a coyote, waiting for him to die so that it may feast on his flesh!
boo hoo!
he says
soon I will be in the belly of the coyote so that it may run and laugh another day!
what is the power that drives this creature, and why was this cruel fate decided for me?


he does not see an animal looking for a meal. he sees the power of a god behind it, a power that has bested him!
this is the curse of man!
he is forever deceived by his mind!
it causes him to not see a stone when it is just a stone.
instead, his diseased eye sees a weapon, or a symbol. the shape of a woman. a spark of inspiration.
you see human intellect as a disease?
how could it be anything else?!

the curse causes man to stumble through this world forever asking questions.
what is this?
what is that?
why is this?
and where he does not find an answer, he places one there himself!
he sees a mountain crumble and says
only a god can do this
and so I am born!
I am aware of how myths originate, coyote.
they were used as teaching tools, as comfort and explanation, passed down generation to generation
ah! but remember, the man in the desert is alone when he dies!
I tell you it is not!
and do you know why?
what becomes of his comforting story? is it lost forever?

It is because they are absorbed into the ether!
the ether?
yes! you may only peer into it with your blinker stone, but I swim in the ether!
I bend it to my will!
It is as much a part of this world as the ocean or the sky!
upon death, man's mind is released into the ether.
and this power allows my world to spin!

so... the guides
yes! your friends, the guides of death, this is their important work!
for some there may be an afterlife, but in the end, everyone is brought back into the ether.
the mind of man may be a curse, but what would I be without it?
a mangy dog, scavenging in the desert for scraps?
I am a being of the thoughts of man!
I can barely be said to exist at all!
you see now that man is truly the most powerful creature in this world!
can you imagine how this knowledge makes ysengrin feel? one as proud as he?
oh! he must have left!
hahahaha!

I noticed something wrong with your theory, coyote.
Oh?
Ysengrin told me about Jones.
Jones?
Oh! that's what you call wandering eye!
hahaha! she is a perfect illustration of what I was talking about!
In fact, consider it your task to talk to her about this!
She already knows my great secret, hahaha!
Be sure to ask her about the stars in the night sky!
that is enough for today! go on now, ysengrin is that way, he will take you back!

I really wish you weren't so rude to Ysengrin.
he's my friend, you know
haha haha!
well! let's see if you are so eager to ride on his back and tie up your hair after this day
heh.

ysengrin,
are you ready to return?
ysengrin, why does coyote's theory upset you so much?
it is an insult
that he should claim to be created by man...
he is a god of men, he should be revered, worshipped.
not rolling on his back, showing you his belly.
Clench
there's more to it than that though, isn't there?

coyote is not the only powerful one.
the trees bend at my touch, the bones of my prey are crushed in my jaws
yet coyote says I am a figment of man?
does he think we would be mere simple minded animals were it not for humans?
impossible.
I cannot bear the thought.
I-I cannot bear it..
you should feel insulted too. by his words, your ancestors were nothing but stories

well, I feel real enough.
I have my own thoughts and memories, and those seem real enough too.
just because coyote says something doesn't make it true.
hrmf.
but then I see myself as human more than anything else.
does it really make you hate humans so?
I hate the way they see me
they think I am weak...
they think they are better than me...
and yet, you've shaped your body into that of a human's...
you shouldn't pay too much mind to coyote's funny little theory
you... find it funny?

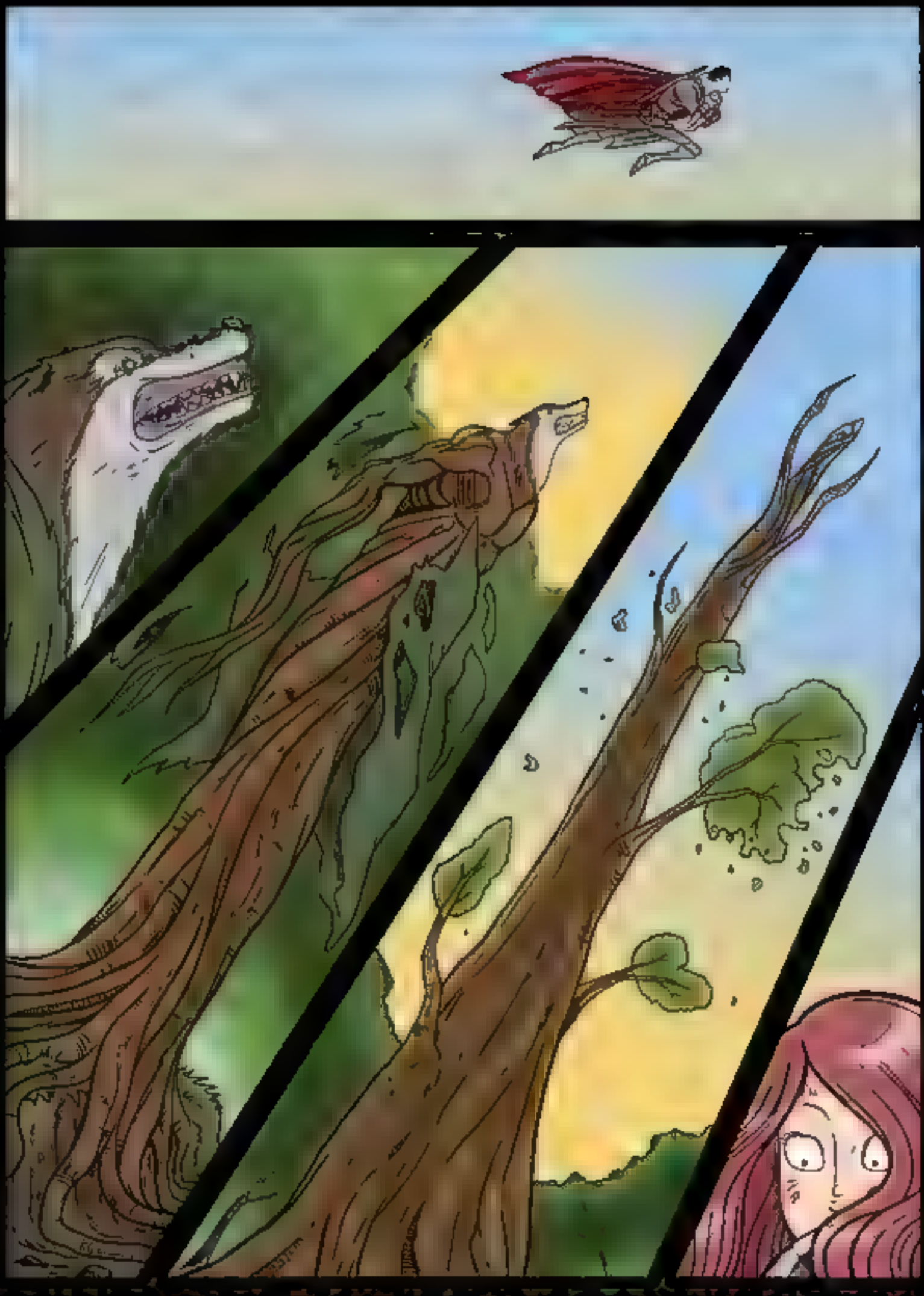
no, I didn't mean it that way I just meant-
you think you are better than me because you are human?
I should have known..
ysengrin..
no wonder you treat coyote with such disrespect ..
ysengrm, please be calm!
you think he's right, don't you?!
ysengrm!
CRACK

GRUUH!

ysengrin, please!
you're not like this!
Crack!
!

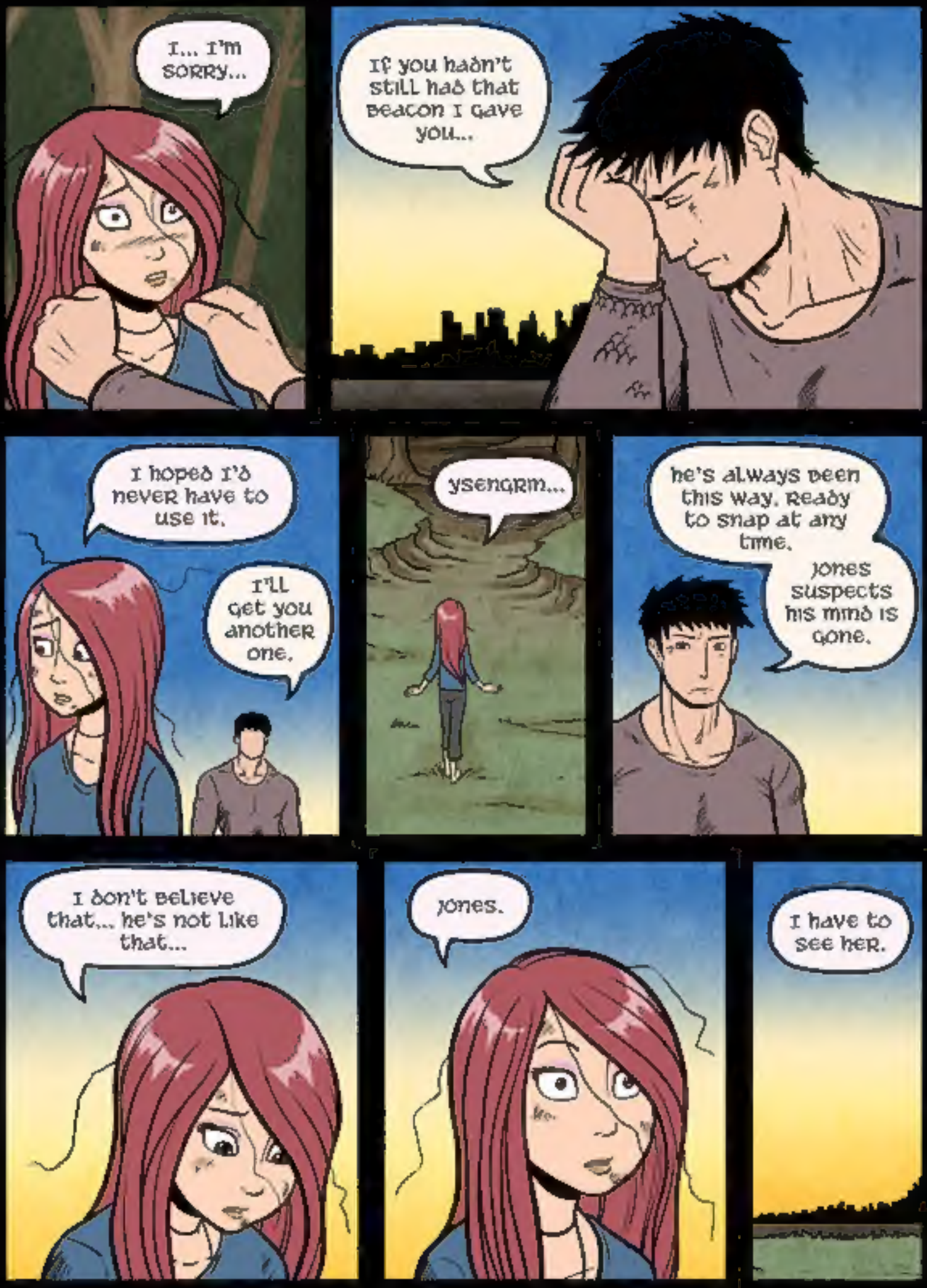
at the first sign of trouble, snap this beacon.
wherever you are, I'll be able to find you and be there within five seconds.
five...
SNAP
four...
Rustle
th-three ..
two...
o...one ..
oh, ysengrin...

Crack
Crack



he's still coming!
hey!
please calm down, ysengrin!
use your blinker stone!
Blink
FLASH

are you hurt?!
oh, ysengrim: what.., what happened?!
are you hurt?!
I've never seen him like this!
drink this if you're hurt!
Leave me alone! I don't need anything!
dammit, carver!
you've been walking around like you own the place!
these are dangerous creatures you're playing with, they are not your pets.


I... I'm sorry...
If you hadn't still had that beacon I gave you...
I hoped I'd never have to use it.
I'll get you another one.
Ysengrm...
He's always been this way. Ready to snap at any time.
Jones suspects his mind is gone.
I don't believe that... he's not like that...
Jones.
I have to see her.

Huff
Huff
now then.
hello, ysengrin!
what...
what...
I - I tried to attack... the girl...
why did I -
oh, come now!
there, there!
shush, shush shush!

now why don't I just remove this nasty little memory?
no... please...
n~
I'll keep hold of it for you, along with the others.

Stand back up and pull yourself together!
yes, coyote.
come along now!